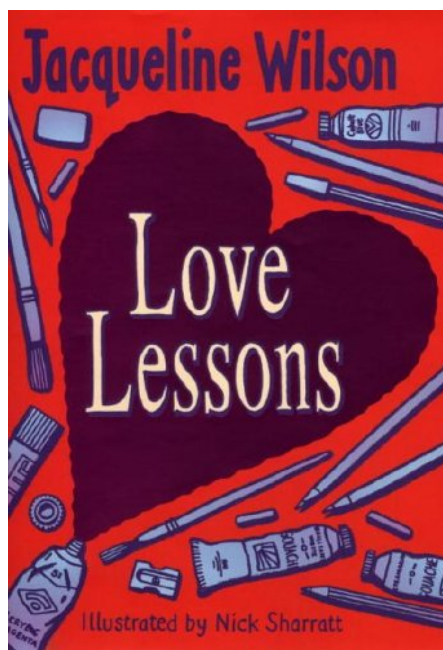




Love Lessons

Jacqueline Wilson

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Fourteen-year-old Prue and her sister Grace have been educated at home by their super-strict father all their lives. Their attempts to find out what being an ordinary teenager is like — buying nice clothes instead of wearing Mum's odd, hand-made garments, reading teenage magazines etc. — are greeted with fury by their Dad. But when he is hospitalized with a stroke, Prue suddenly discovers what it's like to have a little freedom.

Unable to cope, their mother enrolls them at the local comprehensive where, for the first time, they experience school life. Prue had never thought it would be so so hard to fit in. The only person she can talk to is the young Art teacher, Rax. She and Rax bond over art lessons, and soon he asks her to babysit for him and his wife. This becomes a regular "date" and Prue can't wait for the ten minutes they have alone together when he drives her home. She wonders if Rax has the same feelings for her. But he can't act upon them, can he?

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Love Lessons Details

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Author : Jacqueline Wilson

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From Reader Review Love Lessons for online ebook

Stacey O'driscoll says

I enjoyed it. It wasn't brilliant and I admit I did pretend the heroine in the story was 16/17 not 14, however; I really liked the teacher and her relationship and did want them to be together. Even if it was unrealistic. Anybody who says that the teacher is a pervert needs to do some research. He didn't do anything wrong throughout this book and although he was sensible in his decision at the end he did love her and she loved him. I wanted them together in the end, even if they waited a few words but like he said he was going to continue to teach. Have a normal life with his wife and she would forget him. HGe was wrong about the last part I guess. Sad but realistic.

Beth says

So I'm twenty-four years old, and I'm still a little obsessed with Jacqueline Wilson and her books. Yet, I'm weirdly okay with that. She has been my go to author since I was a little girl, and I haven't read one of her books that hasn't made me smile.

Now, Love Lessons, I bought recently on Kindle (although I have the hardback), just because it is one of my all time favourite books. I read this last night and I felt as if I was a teenager sat in bed reading it once again. The story, the writing, the meaning, everything just grips me about this book. It was also one of the books that I wrote an alternate ending to when I was younger and the start of my writing hobby.

I can never fault this lady for bringing such love and joy to children and adults with her wonderful books. She will always be my favourite author, and I will forever continue to read her work.

Lulufrances says

Jacqueline Wilson occupied a huge amount of my pre-goodreads era childhood reading. I constantly read and reread her books, especially Double Act fyi, and this one was odd one out in that I can't remember where and when I came across it.

So fast forward many years and I had the opportunity for a reread because my uni friend and I got to chatting about dear ol' Wilson, and she promised me, she'd get me one of her copies and tada I was presented with Love Lessons.

It's no secret this has a lot to do with a forbidden relationship between Prue and her (married, way older) art teacher Rax and that was the only thing I could recall from the first time reading Love Lessons. It seemed weird and off at the time, and now it seems even more gross and disgusting, ugh. So humberty. Ah well it wouldn't be a Jacqueline Wilson without problematic issues. Throw in a dose of dysfunctional families and this is your perfect prototype.

It was okay and I do think she has a nice fluent style of writing; however, middle grade is not my thing and rereading middle grade even less so, which explains the low rating.

Tara Calaby says

Jacqueline Wilson is one of my absolute favourite contemporary authors. I love the way that she focusses on the kind of children who often are ignored in junior fiction and the way that she so cleverly captures the way that young people think and perceive the world. I can't love this book, though. I think it sends a dangerous message to highly impressionable readers, and I was extremely disappointed that it was written and published in this form.

I will go into my qualms and the reasoning behind them under the spoiler cut, but first I'll discuss what's *good* about *Love Lessons*, because there are many positives to this novel. As always, Wilson is extremely adept at creating an authentic voice for her protagonist. Prudence is flawed and believable and her naivety is clear in the way it informs her perception and her actions. Grace is also a well-crafted character, whose growth throughout the book can be seen both in terms of her exposure to more life experience and of Prudence's changing impressions of her.

Wilson also does an excellent job of depicting the distance between Prudence and her peers and of showing how awkward and out of place she feels when she finds herself at school for the first time in years. It is easy to empathise with her shame and confusion and natural to hope that she finds friendship and a sense of belonging at Wentworth High.

My trouble with *Love Lessons* centres around the way Wilson deals with Prudence's crush on her teacher, Mr Raxberry. From here on in, there will be **major spoilers** for the novel, so please don't read on if this bothers you.

(view spoiler)

Ultimately, I found *Love Letters* greatly worrying. I don't believe young people should read this book without a subsequent discussion with an adult about why Rax's behaviour was inappropriate and how the consequences shown within the novel differ from real-life outcomes. Disappointing.

Aigasaki Kohana says

I first read this book when I was about 12. At that point in time I found it really interesting and read it super quickly, but obviously I couldn't understand it as I can now when I am a bit older. Last week I was looking through my books and decided to take it out. After reading a chapter, I couldn't stop reading. I felt like now that I am actually Prue's age, I can much better relate to the things she feels as I have felt some of them too. Out of the many teenage romance books that I have read, this one pictures first love in one of the best ways. I am 15 and I get that I might not see why people who are older might see it as disturbing in terms of Prue's relationship with her teacher, but to be honest I think any teenager who reads this (as long as they are in the sane mind) will understand that what she was doing was incredibly irresponsible and could have lead to

worse consequences. Therefore, I would say that I would recommend this to anyone looking for a good book about first love. Out of most YA fiction books, the writing in this one wasn't too stale and redundant and really reflected the feeling that you face when you are young and in love. To some extent I would say that I probably also enjoyed it as I felt a personal connection with Prue as we are similar in many ways, but I feel like many others will also relate to many parts of her complicated life. This might not be the height of intellectual literature, but not to read this for the pure joy of a quick, romantic read, from my perspective would be a loss :)

Beth says

I've read and loved Jacqueline Wilson's books since childhood, and have probably read and thoroughly enjoyed almost everything she has produced (despite being long out of childhood now!). I recently finished her latest novel *Clover Moon* and thought it was great, proving she has lost none of the ability that she has always been possessed of. However, *Love Lessons* proves to me to be the most lacking of her work so far.

The story follows Prue, a girl who has previously only ever been homeschooled, as she tries to negotiate life in a tough inner-city high school, and the way she falls for her art teacher. It is a subject matter that is important to discuss, particularly with the age group that this book is intended for, and I applaud any children's or YA author who tackles it. However, the way it is done here is worrying. Jacqueline Wilson seems to have portrayed a highly romanticised version of a student/teacher infatuation, with little to no counterpoint to offer a critical perspective on the matter.

It isn't that her characters or story development are bad; far from it. They show her classic talent for creating fleshed out characters whom the reader really grows to feel for, and the story moves along at an easy pace. My main criticism isn't even the (controversial?) subject matter. It is the way that subject matter is handled, and in particular the way Prue is ultimately treated and judged by those around her.

Yes, it is told from Prue's viewpoint, which, as a 14 year old naive schoolgirl, is completely and understandably one-sided. I can fully accept that from her position, the relationship she and Rax form is romantic, tortured, unfortunate and misunderstood. I think Wilson has captured very well the feelings of a lovelorn 14 year old. But where the book is let down for me is in a lack of a counter to this viewpoint. One way in which this could have been produced is to show Prue and Rax actually eloping together (something not so out of the ordinary, as something similar is often in the papers) and the reaction of the school, her parents, friends etc to this. I think that would have been a very effective way of showing a flipside to Prue's infatuation, without jumping out of character.

My other main criticism of the book is the way in which the adults who are aware of something happening between Prue and Rax, namely the headteacher, react. The headteacher actually blames Prue for the entire relationship, basically insinuating that she led Rax on and used her wicked womanly ways to ensnare him. What a ridiculous load of victim-blaming, sexist nonsense! At the end of the day, Prue is a child and Rax is in a position of authority. However well-written and sympathetic the characters are, and however much the relationship is portrayed as normal, if there is any blame to be placed anywhere here, it should be firmly on Rax's shoulders.

Unfortunately, this could have been a much better, more effective novel. As it is, I think it is dangerously one-sided and lacking because of that.

Amanda O'Donnell says

Fifteen-year-old Prue and her sister Grace have been educated at home by their controlling, ultra-strict father almost all their lives. When Dad is suddenly rushed to hospital, unable to move or speak, Prue at last discovers what it's like to have a little freedom.

Sent to school for the first time in her life, Prue finds it unexpectedly difficult to settle in. The only person she can talk to is her kindly and handsome young art teacher, Rax. When she starts babysitting for Rax's children, Prue finds herself longing for the ten minutes they have alone together as he drives her home. But she can't act on her secret feelings, can she?

Nicola says

I read this book when I was in my early teens and loved it. Re-reading it now at 18 I got a really big shock. Much more wise about the world (although still not very) than I was back then, I can see that this is one messed up book with worrying morals considering the age group it's directed at. It basically sends the message that there is nothing wrong with an older teacher reciprocating feelings a FOURTEEN year old student has for him. And not just any old student, but a vulnerable one who has led a sheltered life and had little social interaction and certainly no 'street smarts'. I definitely wouldn't let anyone younger than myself read this.

Futhermore, I found the main character, Prue, to be utterly unlikeable. She's a self-centered, arrogant little priss who thinks nothing of making fun of a boys (who obviously likes her) dyslexia. I know she isn't meant to be massively likeable but it got the point where it was just irritating and I was facepalming on a regular basis.

I can honestly say though that there were likeable characters like Grace and Toby, and I can never find fault with Jacqueline Wilsons writing in itself. As always, she's a good writer, but unfortunately the contents of this book left much to be desired.

FoodxHugs says

So, I read this book a while ago, but I really enjoyed it. In typical Jacqueline Wilson style, it deals with an oddball girl and her relationships with her Art teacher, her sister and parents.

Prudence can be an irritating character, but I've read worse, so I didn't really care about her depiction. She's a freak, so I can understand why Rax (the art teacher) would sympathise with this lonely girl. It had a few funny moments, but if you're expecting a sexy, panty-ripping fantasy involving sex, sex, and more desk-banging, this is not the story for you.

There is no sex. But what little romance there is, is presented very sweetly. A few chaste-ish kisses in the car and the girl sleeping in his bed (while him and his wife go off for a night out).

Has a few unbelievable moments - why would the teacher be stupid enough to offer her a baby-sitting work?? No teacher would do that. He's not presented as a creep, but he makes questionable decisions. :/

Despite all this, I enjoyed this novel. One of Jackie's better stories. :)

Lauren Crossley says

This book... I don't even know where to start. I first read this when I was 15 years old and the story of Prue & Rax has remained with me ever since. I swear I don't go a SINGLE day without thinking about them and everything that happened to them in this book. By the amount of reviews this book has already received, I'm guessing you can pretty much figure out the story. Prue has lead a very isolated life and is thrown into a completely crazy and bewildering world which she doesn't have much understanding or knowledge about. I do agree with what a lot of readers are saying, sometimes her behaviour is extremely immature but I can't really blame her, she's not the average fourteen year old girl because her home life has not allowed her to be that way.

I adore the whole set up of Prue and Rax having their five minutes alone in the car together. That's all they have and that's what makes it so precious and sacred to them. A lot of people are calling Rax a pervert and lots of other terrible things. Of course I can understand why but it is difficult for me to see his character as a complete predator, if he was then HE would have been the one to pursue something with her but he didn't. In fact, he fought his feelings and attraction to her for a long time and he was the one who was very firm in his decision to cut all ties with her. Prue is somewhat naive and can't understand why they can't be together if they really love each other. A part of Rax feels the same way but it's defeated by the realistic, practical side of himself which knows he has no future with Prue. Rax is married, has two children and a career to think about. Although he does admit that he frequently fantasises about them together and having a relationship with her at night.

It's impossible for me not to sympathise with both of them. The stolen moments they have together are few and far between but they are what makes the book so spectacular for me. There is something so romantic and forbidden about their love for one another and when I first read it I remember being unsure about Rax's feelings for Prue, I didn't know whether he was just trying to help her adjust to her new school and situation or if he felt the same way as her. Of course, now that I know he was indeed in love with her, it makes every single scene between them even more unique and special for me. At one point Prue actually observes him whispering the word 'yes' when she demands him to tell her that she loves him. Rax is not ready to admit his feelings and is only comfortable doing so when he thinks Prue can't see him and he's driving away after her dropping her home after babysitting. He murmurs his answer to himself but Prue spots him. When I was younger I honestly thought she might have imagined it but she later confronts him and he doesn't deny the fact that she observed him confessing his love to her.

The ending of this book actually made my heart ache (in a good way) because I am a sucker for bittersweet endings. I love a romance that ends sadly. I know this might sound weird but a story will stay with me much longer and remain in my thoughts if things don't end happily. It's so easy to forget and move onto the next book if he here's a happy ending and this is exactly the opposite of what happened with Love Lessons. It's nearly been 10 years and this book is still on my mind! I'm actually reading it again at the moment, I analyse every single word Rax spoke to Prue because I'm so desperate to divulge just a tiny bit more from this story. I know there will never be a sequel and this really, really sucks. I frequently imagine the future for Prue and Rax, I like to think they accidentally stumble across one another one day, when Prue is older and wiser. I like to think they could possibly rekindle what they once had. Rax would have to leave his wife but to be honest I think their marriage was close to the end anyway.

What more can I say? I love everything about is book, it broke my heart in the most in incredible way. READ it!!!! You don't have to be a teenager to appreciate the splendour of this book. It's one of my favourites and I have read many, many books. This one is phenomenal, a true love story.

Laura says

Wilson expertly tackles difficult issues, ranging from divorce, domestic violence, bullying and bereavement. In 'Love Lessons' she approaches perhaps the most controversial of topics, that of a forbidden student-teacher relationship. Prue is just fourteen, but is drawn dangerously close to her handsome, outgoing art teacher, Rax.

Prue's home life is challenging, to say the least, although I found parts of it to be overly exaggerated which took away from the overall believability of the book. Her father is controlling, domineering and quite the bully. Conversely, her mum is passive and afraid to stand up to her husband. She is not allowed control of money, and makes her own clothes and that of her two daughters.

When Prue's dad suffers a stroke and is rendered helpless in hospital, Prue is suddenly allowed a little freedom. She can socialise, she can buy what she wants. She doesn't need to tip toe around the house anymore.

Although I applaud Wilson for choosing to write about this controversial topic, I worried about the message it sends out to impressionable readers. When Rax implies he loves Prue, this suggests that when an adult tells a child this, it makes whatever might be morally wrong (or in this case, illegal) okay. It doesn't matter if the child is not afraid or feels she is being exploited, but that the adult is taking advantage.

I would suggest that this book is best saved for more mature young readers.

Lisa says

First read, May 3, 2010: This gets four stars because, yes, I really liked it, as in I enjoyed reading it and didn't want to put it down. It was well written and the characters were very well developed. HoWeVeR: The "relationship" between Prudence and Rax is not very believable. Prue is 14 years old and acts even younger in a lot of ways since she was so isolated for much of her life. I can't quite get into the teacher's head here. Is he having a mid-life crisis? Is he a perv? What's up? I like how Wilson explores these gritty subjects in her books, but I felt like this one wasn't very realistic, unlike *The Illustrated Mum* which was right on the money. The crazy thing about Jacqueline Wilson's books is that the covers and the illustrations are all so childlike and cutesy, and the stories are so gritty. Moms everywhere are getting the wool pulled, big time :)

Second read, April 18, 2015: I had such a different experience reading this book the second time! Again I loved it, but I found the relationship very believable this time. I think I saw the characters of Prudence and Rax in a completely different way. 5 years ago, my oldest was 5 years old and now he's 10. Things have changed a lot since I was 10, and now I'm seeing what Max is up against. I really think Jacqueline Wilson is a brilliant writer. Her work is very different from anything else I've ever read. She really doesn't shield anything from the reader (abuse, neglect, extreme poverty, pre-mature sexualization, etc.), but she portrays these heavy topics through the lens of a child or a young teenager and she does it so well. This time around I listened to audio, and it was incredibly well done. The narrator was Finty Williams. She was outstanding! I finished this one and immediately downloaded *The Diamond Girls*, also narrated by Finty Williams. I'm almost done and it's just as good. So after this second reading (on audio), I'm upping my rating from 4 to 5 stars. If you haven't read Jacqueline Wilson yet, you're missing out! My recommendation is to start with *The Illustrated Mum*. The covers are so cute and sweet and childlike, but the subjects are super serious, told through the eyes of the child living in the situation. Jacqueline Wilson is wildly popular in the UK, but not well known here. I think she's brilliant! Highly recommended!

JotheBookhowler says

I read this book way back in 2008 when I first bought it. I was in the mood for books that have really girly, high school crush settings and the cover instantly caught my eye. I re-read this not long ago and have a review I'd like to write down.

Love Lessons is basically about a girl in her early teens named Prue being thrown into the "normal" school system after being homeschooled the whole of her life after her slightly (more like totally by my standards) dysfunctional dad experiences a severe stroke. But before I move on I would like to say this:

IT'S NOT A TYPICAL NEW GIRL TRYING TO FIT IN A NEW SCHOOL MEETS THE POPULAR GUY ROMANCE STORY.

Her family first of all, is definitely not average at all. They live these stagnant lives that rejects technology, buying clothes from actual stores, and sending your kids to school. The reason for this way of living is heavily influenced by Prue's father (which is a pretty interesting character himself), while her mother plays a very passive role, allowing her father's dysfunctional influence. Prue, being a teenager at the cusp of rebellion regularly questions her father's ridiculous rules, and together with her younger sister, Grace, fantasize and yearn about how it would be like to have privileges that other normal girls have.

And sometimes fantasies do become reality and her dad was sent to the hospital due to stroke after a hilarious falling out with Prue (view spoiler), and the three remaining female members of the family are left to face and figure out the "Real World", even more so when it became mandatory for Prue and Grace to attend school. And the whole school experience is definitely an adventure. (view spoiler)

So, if you are into the controversial romance thing, there's something of sort in this book for you, but because this book seems to target a rather young audience, you would need to look back and think about WHY IT'S CONTROVERSIAL and read on with caution if you are around Prue's age or younger. And if you are looking for a light-hearted, exaggeratedly unconventional story that involves family, finding an unexpected friend in trouble times and includes a (view spoiler), you might like this as well.

I give it **four stars**, because despite the weird plot, it was really fun to read because you just can't take the book seriously and sort of relatable, if you're a homeschooled kid with no access to the internet or brand new clothes.

April (Aprilius Maximus) says

Yikes.

I read some Jacqueline Wilson as a child and LOVED them (mainly Tracey Beaker), and after I saw that Maddie and Bee on BookTube have been talking about her books over the last few months, I decided to give her books a crack as an adult. So I went on her website, unsure of where to start and I decided why not just start at the beginning? Her website listed Love Lessons as her first published work (that was still available and in print) so I rented the ebook out from my library and OH MY LANTA this was horrible.

Firstly, it's about a student teacher romance which NO THANK YOU.

Secondly, the romance was not believable IN THE SLIGHTEST on his part.

Thirdly, the constant fat shaming was soooooo bad.

Fourthly (is that even a word?) the main character was HORRIBLE. Like, yes she was constantly abused by her father, but she never once thought about how her actions and words would affect others. This book gets a bit fat NOPE from me, but I will continue to try out her other books - the ones that I'm actually interested in like her Victorian novels and her more popular, well loved books.

Gina says

The book was good but I wanted Rax to dump his wife for Pure . Lol I sound evil when I say it but it's the truth!

Georgia Barr says

I just finished this book, as in on the same day I'm writing this review. It started off very well and good and the writing is amazing and I was really interested. But then she started really falling for the teacher, and, even worse, he led her on! A full-grown man had a freaking make-out sesh with a girl MY AGE (14) and got to keep his job and his family, yadda yadda yadda, while the child in question got freaking expelled for a mistake in judgement!

I think that Prue had no idea what she was actually getting into and her supposed "love" for Rax was just a teeny crush (her first, might I add, aside from Tobias, who really doesn't count. And everyone knows their first crush seemed like the one they would marry).

So, I think that Love Lessons was brilliantly written and great, but also so very wrong on many levels. I have also concluded that Ezria are the only teacher-student relationship I will ever accept in my life.

Saph Rose says

[I was so convinced that I would feel differently about the way that Rax and Prue parted in the end, but I wasn't. Still, in my mind, I imagine that their affair grows and grows until she is 18 and he can finally leave his wife. I feel no guilt saying this for a few reasons.

1. You can tell how tired Marianne is
-

Susan Francis says

Book covers like this one put me off. I don't like them because they scream 'Hey little girlie, you know you want me. How could you not? After all, I'm pink and I've got a big red heart. Buy me!' However, Jaqueline Wilson is an author who is well regarded and despite never having read any of her books I was interested in the subject – teacher/pupil relationship – and I wanted to see how she tackled it.

I am not sure what age the book is meant to be for. The subject matter suggests young adult but it reads as though it is for the under 12s. (I suspect teenagers would find it somewhat patronising and in parts eye-rollingingly ridiculous.)

I would divide this novel into 2 parts with the distribution of those parts at 60:40. The first 60% is about

Prue, her family life and how she comes to be stuck in a school she hates (and quite rightly so under the circumstances). The last 40% focuses on her relationship with her art teacher, Rax, who she falls in love with.

I can see the point of the first part as it is Prue's backstory and it clarifies why Prue is the way she is and how she came to behave the way she did. All that was fine but there was too much of it. The book was supposed to be about her relationship with her teacher and there wasn't enough of that.

Also, I can appreciate that there are probably parents like Prue's that exist in the real world but I found the whole situation too extreme – verging on the ridiculous. I am not keen on novels that exaggerate characters because instead of being realistic they are like caricatures, which only work in comedic situations as far as I am concerned. In the same way scenarios become too animated. (view spoiler)

What I think Wilson did well – very well – was the relationship between Rax and Prue, when we finally get to it. I found it realistic and could see how things could play out exactly as they did. (view spoiler)

I do not believe that Wilson was being irresponsible for portraying the relationship as she did – on the contrary. (view spoiler) If anything Wilson is saying to girls, if you do this, this is what will happen – which I think is pretty responsible. Unfortunately I think there is a danger for the message to be misinterpreted as the complete opposite and therefore lost.

Haya says

Prue and her sister Grace have been educated at home by their controlling, super-strict father all their lives. They know they are different to 'normal' girls but their attempts to find out what being an ordinary teenager are like. But when Dad has a stroke and ends up in hospital, Prue suddenly discovers what it's like to have a little freedom.

This book was hideously boring and seemed to drag on forever. Jacqueline Wilson is a really talented writer, and I've enjoyed other books of hers, especially *The Lottie Project* and *My Sister Jodie*, but here, her characters were dull and dramatizing-ly desperate. The only characters I liked were Prue's pitiable imaginary friends, Jane and Tobias, Grace, their mother, Toby, and Iggy and Figgy. Mr. Rax is a pedophile, Prue is a desperate weirdo and a creepy stalker and the father is just annoyingly stupid. They all pissed me off so bad, I wanted to hurl the book across the room and set it on fire.

This "love" between Rax and Prue wasn't real. I could feel that Prue felt it, but it wasn't love per se, instead, it was like this need to feel affection from both ways. I didn't feel that Rax reciprocated at all, though. He was at first this nice person, but he eventually grew distant and truly unlikeable as I progressed through the story. I couldn't understand how a 20/30-something-year old kiss or fall in love with a 14-year old. Moreover, I couldn't fathom why Prue would choose a scruffy, married man with 2 kids over Toby? Toby was *THERE!* He was attractive and girls fawned over him and all. Rax, on the other hand, is just so...UGH!

Normally, when I read about a student in love/has a crush on her teacher, I'd think "Aww! That's cute! I hope they work out, but then I'd eventually want the girl to end up with her best friend, or the arrogant annoying boy, or whatever. I mean, most girls have crushes on their teachers, but doesn't the idea creep them out (Ezra and Arya are definitely an exception!) Anyway, a teacher's supposed to be in a position of responsibility and reliability.

I know there is some hidden purpose in this story, and it would have been enjoyable if the characters didn't

give me a migraine. I just wish Wilson would've given the reader insight on what would happen later...

I just THANK GOD I'm done with this book and left Prue and her stupid, unrealistic fantasy of her and Rax altogether!

Melissa **Just Really Loves Musicals says**

Read this when I was about 12, I think. And I adored it and thought it was super romantic. Now I'm 20, I'm wondering if I'd feel the same way. May have to reread this at some point and see, but for now, I'll stick with the rating I would've given it when I read it last.
