



Just Patty

Jean Webster

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Just Patty is Jean Webster's sixth novel, published in 1911. Prequel to When Patty Went to College book.

Jean Webster (pseudonym for Alice Jane Chandler Webster) was born July 24, 1876 and died June 11, 1916.

She was an American writer and author of many books including Daddy-Long-Legs and Dear Enemy.

Just Patty Details

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Author : Jean Webster

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Best bookstore find of 2016, hands down. I love Daddy-Long-Legs and Dear Enemy and so finding another book by Jean Webster was the ultimate treat. This one isn't in epistolary style, like those two, which made it feel very familiar and yet strikingly different.

Patty and her friends get into all sorts of mischief and shenanigans as they complete their final year at their private boarding school. The environment and tone reminded me some of A Little Princess but it is less morally smug and more fun. I squealed in delight when a Pendleton showed up. Awkward age gap but dare I wish there was *more* of that?

Such fun. I highly recommend this one.

Li says

“Just Patty” is a collection of short stories about Patty and her school friends at boarding school. The first story sets the scene, introducing Patty and her two best friends, as well as the teachers and other pupils who we get to know better in later stories.

I'm an unashamed fan of old-style school stories, but haven't read many with American settings. “Just Patty” is set at St Ursula's, a “church school” for – and I'm reading in between the lines here – daughters of the more privileged classes. There was talk of dancing dresses for the evening, games of blindman's bluff and hoop-rolling, and singing school songs – I'm not sure how typical this was of the times, but I enjoyed this peek at a bygone era.

Patty's impetuous or “exhilarating” nature is possibly over-emphasised at times, but overall, I thought these were a set of genuinely charming stories. My favourites were probably the two loosely-linked ones: when Patty decides to make the most of some “unexpected” free time and explores the grounds of a irascible millionaire – outcome predictable, but fun all the same – and a hilarious one about a failed midnight prank and a burglar, which ends on a sweet and uplifting note.

A version of this is posted on my blog: <http://bookdaze.wordpress.com/2011/03...>

Anna (Curiosity comes before Kay) Partrick says

Patty and her two best friends Conny and Priscilla are appalled when they find out they've been separated as roommates for their senior year at Saint Ursula's boarding school. Patty will not let it stand and the girls come up with schemes to go back to rooming with one another. The book follows Conny, Priscilla, Patty and their schoolmates (but mostly Patty) through their senior year. It's a series of vignettes about friendship, mischief and growing up in the early 1900s.

When I downloaded this for my Kindle (it's free on Amazon as part of Project Gutenberg), I had already read Daddy Long-Legs and Dear Enemy. Jean Webster has a pretty sharp sense of humor and writes wonderfully relatable heroines, that put me in mind of L.M. Montgomery (only with some extra snarkiness, versus dreaminess) and her Anne series. I thought about reading When Patty Goes to College first since it was written before this one, but decided to go in chronological order by the actual setting of the book. I normally am not a huge fan of books told in short story/vignette form, but this one really was a pretty good book when it comes down to it.

Patty is an absolute lightning rod for mischief and makes it a habit to deliberately misinterpret things that people say to her or instruct her to do - with mostly hilarious results. The other two girls are in the mischief with her, but Patty is most definitely the ringleader! There were some that were almost entirely humorous, like the incident where Patty and the girls strike for better/more equal treatment in Latin class, and the incident with one of the girls having a fake beau (boyfriend) to hurt another girl's feelings (Patty takes care of that one with some pretty funny antics). But there were also stories like the one where Patty is stuck at school for Christmas and decides to help a lonely and out of place student who feels abandoned have a meaningful holiday. Also, the incident with the prank where Patty accidentally encounters a real burglar and finds him a job when she goes trespassing on a grumpy, reclusive millionaire's property. Patty always means well, even when she's trying to get around doing things that she should (like studying to make up an exam that she misses).

Overall I was impressed with this book and felt like the general tone to it avoided the malicious spirit that books centered around pranks and boarding schools tend to have on occasion (whether by accident or design, things do move in that direction quite often). I am only sorry that Jean Webster died at such a young age, with so much potential to be a classic children's writer in the collective consciousness instead of nearly forgotten, as I feel she is in our present day. Also interesting to note is that Jean Webster was Mark Twain's grandniece. Who knows maybe his famous snark is some of the reason she manages mischief so admirably in her own novels! I highly recommend this one, especially for fans of classic books along the lines of Anne of Green Gables, Little Women, or the Betsy-Tacy series. My only real complaint is that I wish there were more to this book. It felt far too short, especially with the story Webster chose to end on.

VERDICT: 4.5/5 Stars

No money or favors were exchanged for this review. This book is now available mostly in used bookstores, online, or maybe even at your local library.?

SallyB says

This book made me laugh out loud. It's very clean young adult genre. Not really a full plot but almost a collection of short stories. Enjoyed a look at the beginning of the century boarding school life in America. Jean Webster had a really great sense of humor and sense of understanding.

Jane says

So I've just finished back-to-back novels about two girls named Patty: Jean Webster's Patty Wyatt and Patty Fairfield by Carolyn Wells. Both come from the school of pre-WW1 American girl fiction, and both are charming, but I have to say I enjoyed Jean Webster's story far more than Caroline Wells'. Both Patties have looks, breeding, and brains, but while Wells's Patty happily remains a girl of the patriarchy, Webster's shows some spirit and humor. This more lively Patty toys with clueless members of the patriarchy, takes on "Lady Bountiful" charity and tries to improve upon it, and even stages a worker's strike in support of a struggling classmate. Dated? You bet, but still an enjoyable read.

that you know what their school is like, who their teachers are when she refers to them in passing, and all about who she is and where she comes from. I felt like I walked into a movie halfway through, and spent a lot of time going "Wait, what?" in the first couple of chapters.

There's a definite odour of *Stalky & Co.* in the first couple of chapters, but again--we get no classroom scenes, little real detail of their interaction with adults--it's all taken as read that we know all about it. Webster sets the story in a boarding school for privileged girls (well, there isn't any other kind, is there?) where the girls are taught etiquette as well as Latin, and the emphasis is on "womanly women". I was mildly disappointed. Two and a half stars.

Zen Cho says

It's a pleasant novelty to read American schoolgirl stories. I kept thinking I was reading Susan Coolidge and wondering when it was going to get didactic. But Jean Webster is a way better writer than Susan Coolidge. Very cute lah! And I enjoyed her sharp observations about charity -- how the charitable Christmas gift-giving was more fun for the girls than for the poor kids -- though I wonder whether the ending of the story doesn't kind of fall back into the same trap, of focusing charity on how good it makes the givers feel. But I guess at least they leave the grandparents at home.

Should make note about the weird Irish racism (they have many babies and a peculiar accent!) and classism. It's not too bad considering her era, but still.

Carolynne says

Boarding school, but not British. Frivolous Patty and her friends Conny and Priscilla make an impression on their boarding school. Patty is intended to seem fun-loving and playful, but sometimes (at least from the perspective of a long time librarian and teacher) she just comes off as annoying. A disappointment after the inimitable *_Daddy Long Legs_* and the winning *_Dear Enemy_*, but a fun story about a time long gone by-- in fact it probably never existed.

Rahmadiyahanti says

Selama ini Jean Webster lebih dikenal dengan novelnya "Daddy-Long-Legs" (DDL). Padahal selain itu Webster menulis 7 novel lainnya (setahu saya), salah satunya "Just Patty" yang ditulis tahun 1911, dan tak kalah menarik dengan DDL.

Kagum deh sama Webster, membaca karyanya seperti bukan karya yang ditulis hampir 100 tahun lalu. Karakter Patty yang cerdas, ceria, dan iseng abis, bikin saya gemes.
