



## Finding the Lost: Moose Beach Trilogy Book 2

**Michael Foster**

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*Finding the Lost is magical as its aspirational young lead finds her true strength.*

Alicia is an adventurer by nature. With high school just around the corner, however, long hikes and frog catching have taken a backseat to schoolwork and hanging out with friends. In Michael Foster's middle grade novel *Finding the Lost*, Alicia receives a call to adventure that she must answer; to not respond would mean giving up everything she holds dear. In this second installment of the Moose Beach Trilogy, Alicia rediscovers a magical world that she had long since left behind and learns a little more about what it means to grow up.

Alicia's last visit to the magic Wild Side, a reality existing in parallel to the area around her family's cabin, was three years ago. She's not even sure it's real any longer. When her parents are frozen in a mysterious time bubble, she knows that it's time for another venture into the enchanted woods.

Resilient and resourceful, Alicia packs a bag with a blanket, a flashlight, and some gorp and heads into the wild. Witnessing her self-sufficiency on this solo quest is a delight, especially as she discovers her own strength along the way. Alicia builds fires, forages, and fishes like a true survivalist, opening opportunities for young readers with the possibilities that she represents. Even more inspiring is the persistence of her spirit. Knowing that it's up to her to save the day, Alicia never, ever gives up, even when myriad disappointments come her way.

While Alicia is a powerful role model for young folks on the cusp of adolescence, her story sometimes proceeds like a fleshed out children's book, formulaic as it moves from long walks to character interactions and back again. Alicia, who's astoundingly intelligent, seems to demand more nuance. Also jarring are moments in Alicia's inner monologue that seem out of place. She is almost too aware of her own development, discussing in near clinical terms how she's leaning more on her friends than her parents and often mentioning her growth spurt. The resultant tone can seem condescending.

Alicia will be an aspirational big kid to young readers able to see bits of themselves in her story. *Finding the Lost* is magical as she finds her true strength and realizes that she's had the magic needed to forge her own way all along.

JESSIE HORNESS (December 24, 2019)

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