

Review #06 : *Alice Adams* (1935)

Katharine Hepburn at her youngest and cutest



The success of *Alice Adams* hinges largely on Katharine Hepburn's performance. She does a fine job bringing life and spirit to the part. Alice admires the beautiful and rich daughters of the wealthier families in her town. She longs for their life of privilege, fashionable clothes, and charming suitors. Her own family lives in a modest house : her father isn't a driven and ambitious type, and her brother doesn't behave respectably. Alice attends a social ball wearing an old dress, and puts on a brave face as hardly anyone looks her way. Then, miraculously, a wealthy and affable young man, Arthur Russell played by the delightfully charming **Fred Mac Murray** asks her to dance...



From that point, Alice tries to fool Arthur into thinking that her family is well-off. When he visits, she meets him out on the porch. She talks about all the language, dance, and music lessons she was supposedly gifted with as a child, and makes excuses for why her family's home doesn't look all that splendid. And among these rambling made-up stories are the real kernels of truth about Alice's character – her loneliness and naivete, her bold dreams and self-consciousness. While it's true that she's adopted some of the same values as the more genteel families, she's sympathetic in how she stands up for her family in the moments when it truly counts, and how she's kind and soothing to her parents as well, particularly her loving but often unassertive father – a very moving **Fred Stone**.

When the end of the movie comes and Alice seems resigned to a life filled with more responsibility and less romance, the impossible happens...



Hepburn really made me feel for her character so that even while Alice was being foolishly pretentious, I felt kindly towards her (and at times embarrassed for her). I was moved towards the end, when – with her grand romance seemingly ended – she pushes aside her pain and stands up for her father. Hepburn renders a character who is naive, full of love and fancy, and refreshingly different in key ways from the more fashionable young ladies in town +++