

The Center for the Arts Presents:

2017 Field Trip Study Guide

ALICE

A Wonder Full New Musical

Book, Music & Lyrics

By

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ALICE, A Wonder Full New Musical.

“Who do I want to be or not to be? That’s the Question Alice faces in this adaptation of by *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll.

When Alice decides to bail on her senior life project and attend a concert of her favorite band she digs herself a rabbit hole of trouble.

Alice is a comical, yet poignant look at where our choices take us and some of the not so helpful advice we receive along the way. This regional premier is ideal for high schoolers trying to plan their future, however the hilarity of the characters, combined with the high energy songs and dance numbers appeals to all ages.

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Meet the Characters

Alice – A seventeen-year-old senior in high school, approaching her graduation day.

Miss Turtle – Alice’s teacher.

Amalgum – School guidance counselor.

Donnie – High Schooler and Star Wars nerd who has a big crush on Alice.

R. Abbott – (**White Rabbit**) Delilah’s agent. She runs Wonderland Industries

Delilah – (**Queen of Hearts**) Lead singer of the band Red Queen.

Ssteve – **Royal T** – Songwriter, composer and rapper for Red Queen

Piz and Chaz – (**Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum**) Two high school guys who dream of starting their own band.

Chessie – (**Cheshire Cat**) The school janitor and builder of Wonderland.

Trevor/White Night – Cool guy at school who Alice has a crush on.

The “Its” Matt, March and Dora – (**Matt Hatter, Door Mouse and March Hair.**) Three gossiping snobs who think they are fierce and fabulous.

Missi – Popular talk show host who has all the answers.

Maka – Alice’s advisor in Wonderland and Missi’s best friend.

Bathsheeba – Backup singer for Red Queen.

Jezebel – Backup singer for Red Queen

The Collective – (**Caterpillar**) A new-age advice councilor.

Plot Summary

Act 1

The show opens with Alice, a senior in high school, excited about her approaching eighteenth birthday. Her excitement is overshadowed by a daunting school project. Her Life Project thesis is due by tomorrow and the problem is, Alice has many ideas and dreams of what she would like to do with her life but can't narrow it down to just one. In the song she sings, "*Thinking I have to make up my mind by tomorrow, makes me want to throw up!*"

At school, Alice gushes over her crush Trevor McKnight, who unfortunately doesn't know she exists. Matters deteriorate when her teacher Miss Turtle is less than pleased that Alice can't decide on a career and sends her to the guidance counselor. Meanwhile Donnie, a nerdy classmate who is crushing on Alice, stops her in the hallway and gives her the perfect birthday gift. Two tickets to the Red Queen concert. She is thrilled. Red Queen is her favorite band. The lead singer, Delilah and her thought provoking songs inspire Alice.

Meanwhile, Chessie (Cheshire Cat) the school janitor, listens intently to Alice's and Donnie's musings, and offers a smile of encouragement instead of advice. Chessie is a good listening ear for the students of Ludwig Academy.

Trevor McKnight surprises Alice by asking her if she's going to the Red Queen concert. Thrilled that he actually noticed her, Alice decides to blow off her assignment and attend the concert. Alice belts out her rebellious decision in her unforgettable song, "*Everything Else Can Wait Until Tomorrow.*"

Mesmerized by the band's music, Alice stays for a while after the concert to reflect. It's then she meets R. Abbott (white rabbit) the bands agent. R. Abbott takes an interest in Alice and asks her to visit the Wonderland Agency where they could make all her dreams come true.

With R. Abbott's business card in hand Alice skips school and heads to the agency, despite Donnie's warnings that it would be a bad idea.

Alice ends up at an abandoned building. Donnie, who was intent on following Alice, continues his warnings. Alice ignores his pleas and ends up falling down the elevator shaft. After a long fall she hits the bottom and finds herself in a room full of doors. R. Abbott shows up and explains each door is an opportunity, promising she may just find her perfect life if she chooses the right one.

The first door she opens leads her to The Collective (The Caterpillar), a strange group of people whose leader looks a lot like her guidance counselor at school. When she introduces herself they respond with, "That is what you are called, but who are you?" Their questions to her are, "Do you know what defines you? Do you fit in a category? Are you your job? Are you your friends? Are you the dogma you believe in?" They dismiss her by saying soon she will know who she is once she's on the Missi show. She then enters another door and finds herself on the Missi Duchet talk show. Missi introduces Alice as the next big thing. Missi goes on to tell her studio audience that

hard work really paid off for Alice. Alice knows she's actually not done anything to warrant such fame and attention. The Missi show ends and Alice finds herself in the hallway of doors once more.

Meanwhile her admirer Donnie follows her to the Wonderland agency and falls down the same elevator shaft. He is on a quest to find and rescue her.

Alice stumbles on an elevator and asks the "Elevator Woman" who incidentally looks an awful lot like Chessie the janitor, which way she should go. The Elevator Woman says, "It depends on where you want to go." To which Alice replies that she doesn't really care where. The Elevator Woman then instructs Alice if she doesn't care where she's going then it doesn't really matter, leaving her with the advice that doing nothing is still doing something in this *Mad Mad Wonderland*.

Once again, Alice finds herself in a hallway of doors. She chooses a door and asks for a familiar face. When the door opens, Piz and Chaz, two rock star wannabes from her high school emerge.

Thrilled to see some familiar faces, Piz and Chaz announce that they are her biggest fans now that they saw her on the Missi show. To her delight, they tell her they will stick with her on the rest of her quest through the Wonderland Agency.

Alice is then approached by Matt Hatter, Dora Mauze and March O'Hara. This fashionable trio are the hottest members of the press, reporting on all that's happening. They invite Alice to an exclusive party but insist she spruce up her image so she can run with the *Fierce and Fabulous*. Alice attends the party and tries to be all things to everyone, but fails miserably at first. After some practice Alice is able to fit in, with all the eclectic "in" crowds.

After hours of searching, Donnie finally finds Alice at the party but when he witnesses her changing behaviors he pulls her aside and asks her the question everyone has been asking. "Who are you?"

Angry at his meddling and constant need to rescue her, Alice leaves. Her newfound popularity lands her a ticket backstage to meet Delilah, the lead singer of Red Queen. Alice gushes on her first encounter with Delilah and pours compliments the rock star's way. She tells Delilah how much her music means to her and that the words of her songs inspire her. Delilah delivers a crushing blow when she informs Alice that she doesn't write her music. She admits she doesn't even understand the songs. Alice is surprised to find out the writer of Delilah's songs is actually a man, Royal -T, Rapper for the Red Queen.

As Delilah performs her latest single, *Plastic*, she actually listens to the words and storms off in a rage. Not being able to control her anger her head explodes. Red Queen is now without a lead singer. As fate would have it in Wonderland, Alice is asked to be the new lead singer of Red Queen.

She accepts and as Missi Duchet predicted, Alice Liddell is a hit and becomes the next big thing.

At her first press conference, an ill-prepared Alice stutters and stumbles when answering questions. By the end of the conference she inadvertently offends Missi, Royal-T, Matt Hatter, Dora Mauze and March O' Hara. Furious at her bumbling performance, R. Abbott sends her to rehab.

ACT 2

The second act opens with Matt Hatter, Dora Mauze and March O'Hara, reporting the latest news and informing the public that Alice Liddell, newest lead singer of Red Queen, was sent to rehab.

We follow Alice to Zen Station where she meets Leif, Pete, Iris, Daisy and Freesia. They reside at Zen Station and welcome her to the garden of life. Alice enjoys the peacefulness of Zen station until she realizes that once you arrive, they expect you to *Take Root*, not allowing you to leave. She encounters Delilah who has changed her name to Lily. She is recovering there. Lily, tells Alice she wasn't sent to Zen Station to heal but rather sent there to be buried. The flower children tell Alice not to worry about being buried because once you plant a seed, it grows. Disturbed by their freakish philosophy, Alice makes a run for it and leaves Zen Station.

Lost and alone out in the woods she stumble upon the White Night, (night as in evening). He has an uncanny resemblance to Trevor McKnight, her crush at school. He calls upon his men the White Knights, (as in medieval soldiers). His valiant rescue attempts are awkward and a bit disappointing. Alice finally gets a chance at her true love kiss only to realize there are no fireworks.

Soon after Donnie shows up, he helps her find her way and in doing so, earns Alice's admiration. To leave the Wonderland Agency, Alice must exit through the 13th floor alone. Chessie informs her that there is a lot of Jabberwocky up there. Confused as to what Jabberwocky is, Alice decides to take her chances so she can leave.

Once on the 13th floor, Alice encounters a room full of girls who look just like her, yet all have different personalities and dreams. She realizes they are all just reflections of her. Alice has a defining moment on the 13th floor and sings the song, *I Can See Me Now*. The lyrics begin like this: "I've listened, I've followed, that left me, well hollow. I wanted, direction I found it in my reflection. 'Cause I can see me now, gonna make you proud, and I can shout out loud. Soon you're gonna see, all that I can be, standing out from the crowd. 'cause I can see me now."

Alice leaves the Wonderland Agency finally knowing who she really is.

She arrives back at school, just in time for her report. The show concludes with Alice singing her thesis, *Looking Glass Girl*.

When I grow up

I want to be

Well I'm not sure

But definitely,

I want to spread my proverbial wings until I'm soaring

*Make the world a place that's safe and not be boring
I want to feel like I've a life that's customed made just for me
I hope every future moment isn't planned
And that all the world remains a wonderland
Where my thought when I see, my reflection will be,
I'm glad the looking glass girl is me
I could be many things...*

Discussion Questions

- 1.) Do you find it overwhelming to try and plan your entire life at your age?
- 2.) Would you drop out of school for a chance at fame? Why or Why not?
- 3.) Alice was presented with many doors to choose from. R. Abbott told her that behind one of the doors could be the perfect life.

When you knock

The door will open

It will take you to a place you long to be

There's a right one

And with some luck

You can find it

With a perfect life for you laid out behind it.

Do you believe there are many perfect choices for your life or just one? Please Explain.

- 4.) Do you think the pressure on the youth of today is too great? Explain your answer.
- 5.) When looking at your future do you really believe you have a choice? For example if you wish to become a philosopher and sit around and think all day, could you realistically do that?
- 6.) If you had the power, how would you change the world?
- 7.) What character in the show do you most relate to and why?
- 8.) What do you think was the best lesson presented to Alice during her visit in Wonderland?
- 9.) How well do you think the song PLASTIC represents the celebrities of today?
- 10.) Maka, an expert in positive self-imagining, sings in her song, *Reeling and Writhing*

Distraction is the action that you will take

To direct attention away from those who contradict you

Uglification is the magnification

Of the faults of those who block your success

How often do you believe the media and society do this? Please explain or give an example.

- 11.) Maka goes on to say,

And when you're speaking if you're worried

That folks might not receive it.

I just pulled this whole thing outta my butt

And you believed it.

Shout to the world

*And don't you ever be afraid
Everybody's watchin' you got it made
It doesn't really matter what you're preachin'
Cuz it's gonna strike a chord
As long as you are reeling and writhing
Like it's a message from the Lord.*

What do you think about that passage?

12.) At the end of the show R. Abbott and Chessie run into each other. Pay careful attention to their dialogue:

Abbott – Chessie? Still around after all these years?

Chessie – You know it.

Abbott – I think most people have forgotten all about you. You going up?

Chessie – As usual. You?

Abbott – Going down, as usual. Really, thanks for all the little things you do around here. Just don't forget who runs this place now.

Chessie – No problem, as long as you don't forget who built it.

After watching the performance. How do you interpret the two characters and their meaning of the above dialogue?

Dreams and Desires

Discussion Prompts

- What do you think Alice desired more than anything?
 - 1.) To be a famous rock star
 - 2.) To change the world with her music
 - 3.) To be left alone to decide her life path when she was ready.

Explain your choice by referencing scenes from the show.

- Which Wonderland character do you believe gave Alice the best advice? Explain your answer.
 - 1.) **Chessie** – *In this big dark crazy world, there is so much you can see. So grab your own self by the hand and find out who you want to be. You can't hang your favorite picture if you haven't got the tools.*
 - 2.) **R. Abbott** – *There's something different about you. Something palpable in the air. But why waste it on your friends, when all the world could share. That's where we come in. Why not build a legacy, make your mark in history? Why not let us help you be the best you can be? We can find the perfect you. It's what we do.*
 - 3.) **The Collective**- *Truth is relative and true to the believer of that truth. Therefore all truths are true.*
 - 4.) **Donnie** – *This is like crazy you. This is that moment you will look back on someday and say: What was I thinking? That was when I wasn't me. That's when I stopped being Alice the sensible, with all the potential in the world and became Alice the idiot, who decided to flush her whole chance at graduation down the toilet.*
 - 5.) **Matt, March and Dora** – *So take the night and drink it in. Boredom is the only sin. The only guideline is don't stand on the sidelines.*
 - 6.) **Maka** – *When your breath is stolen by the vision of the crowd. When your body is frozen solid by the fear of striking out. When your spirits feeling shaken and your voice can't sing your song. Imagine there's a massive choir behind you. Lifting you up where you belong. It don't matter what your preachin' It's gonna strike a chord. As long as you are reeling and writhing, like it's a message from the Lord.*
 - 7.) **Freesia** – *Rest your weary head my child the world is hard on you I know. Forcing you to always face the great unknown so how are you to grow? Hidden in the trees, there's no one to oppose us, no stormy wind that blows us. Nothing but stillness, a perfect place to grow.*

- What do you imagine being the perfect life? Why?
- Piz and Chaz sing, *“People with talent never make it, and those who do are just faking it. If you ask my uncle Chuck, he says it all comes down to luck. Because you’re famous and you haven’t done a doggone dilly thing. We wanna be just like you, do nothing and then BOOM blossom! Awesome!”*

Given today’s society, what do you think of Piz and Chaz’s statement? Can you give an example of celebrities who became famous for no particular talent? Why do you think society idolizes them? What is their contribution to the world?

- If you have a dream or desire would you make a big sacrifice to make it come true?

Facing the Jabberwocky

What's on your 13th Floor?

All of us have Jabberwockies in our life. Monsters we must face in order to move forward. For Alice, her Jabberwocky was actually herself. A room full of mirror images. Each doppelganger forcing Alice to choose them as who to be: Alice says these words when facing her Jabberwocky.

“Why choose just one? I am not just one of you. All of you make up one of me! And not just you, I mean where is the Alice that wants to be a mom or have kids, or Gramma Alice kicking it yarn style...or married Alice? They are not in here are they? You are all just reflections that have already been cast by me, or presented to me by someone else. Well guess what? There's more out there. You say, “Who are you?” but what you mean is, what are you? Well, I've listened, I've followed and that left me, well, hollow. I wanted direction, I found it in my reflection. Keep changing, keep growing, your movie now showing. I've seen it, it's boundless, the limits of my potential.”

In your own perception:

Identify Alice's Jabberwocky.

How was her Jabberwocky blocking her way?

Problem / Conflict:

How did she defeat it?

Event Action:

Event Action:

Resolution

How is her problem solved?

What did she learn?

Now imagine **you** are entering the 13th floor.

What is your Jabberwocky?

How is it blocking your ability to move forward?

Problem / Conflict:

How can you defeat it?

Event Action:

Event Action

Resolution / how is your problem solved?

What did you learn?

The World is a Wonderland

*I hope that every future moment isn't planned, and all
the world remains a Wonderland*

W. H. Auden said, "A culture is no better than its woods."

But we live far away from the woods. We have never seen the Haunted Pass or the Black Pools. We have pushed the woods back to the lonely corners of our soul. To manicured patches on highway medians. To well shorn hedges in the suburbs.

Like them, we are trimmed and groomed and pleasant to smell. Our refined sensibilities are offended when we meet Romulus and Remus, brothers raised by wolves. But they have something we do not. A danger, a life-giving wildness found only in the deep woods. And it takes this feral soul to create something great. – John Sowers Heroic Path

How does the above passage relate to the title of this page?

Community Responsibility

What advice would you give a friend who was thinking about bypassing college? Explain your answer.

What advice would you give a friend who was contemplating taking a year off and backpacking through Europe?

What advice would you give a friend who dropped out of high school?

What advice would you give a friend whose dream was to become famous?

Do you believe it's your responsibility to influence someone to a particular life choice?

Do you believe society as a whole, influences your decisions?

We often hear the phrase, "They say...." Who are *they*?

Do you trust *their* opinion? If yes, why?

Elements of Live Theater

AFTER seeing the production...

Imagine you were the director...

Would you have cast the same people for the roles they played? Do you agree with the selection?

Do you feel Alice was represented well?

How do you think the Wonderland Characters were represented in comparison to Alice's schoolmates and teachers?

What might the director have been trying to communicate by these choices?

Choose one cast member and prepare detailed notes regarding their performance. Include what you liked, disliked and would change if you were the director. Was the character you chose credible?

Do you remember what the set looked like?

Was it realistic or abstract?

Was the set functional and believable?

Did the lighting design evoke certain moods? Explain

Were the costumes appropriate for the characters?

Did the overall appearance of the production help to bring the magic of theater to life?

On a separate sheet of paper, design a set you might build for a performance of Alice.

