

Finding the *Splintered* Pieces in *Alice's Adventures in  
Wonderland*

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Young Adult Literature and <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> .....	4
Carroll’s Interrogation of Victorian Culture.....	6
Carroll’s Feminization of Wonderland .....	13
Contemporary Alice Narratives: <i>Splintered</i> .....	18
Howard’s Bridge Between Two Worlds .....	23
Aging Up <i>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland</i> Through <i>Splintered</i> .....	27
Other Re-Imagined Novels .....	36
Conclusion .....	38
Works Cited.....	40

## Introduction

What is Young Adult literature, and why is it important? The answer is simple: Young Adult literature is a genre of literature that accesses the use of fantastical and mythical worlds to explain and gain an understating of puberty to a young audience. As a whole, YA literature is a transformative, bridging genre that allows children and tweens to be better prepared for their own transformative process, puberty. These books connect their readers with characters immersed in mystical and fantastical worlds; the experiences of these characters mimic the experiences of their young readers. As these young readers undergo bodily and emotional changes, they also experience a sexual maturity within themselves, and with others around, which can be a scary and uncertain time for them. Because of this, YA authors have created whole worlds that allow these young readers to not feel as though they are all alone in the changes they are going through. They make young readers feel safe and secure in their bodies, allowing them to undergo this metamorphosis alongside their favorite characters of the same age(s). They teach young readers that these changes are not something to be fearful of. These transitions can, instead, be embraced and welcomed in to allow them to grow and flourish their adult wings, like a form of metamorphosis. According to the American Library Association, Young Adult literature is “inherently amorphous for its constituent terms ‘young adult’ and ‘literature’ are dynamic,” because of the fact that society and culture are constantly shifting, young adult literature can be defined as; a genre that is characterized by change itself (Cart “The Value of Young Adult Literature). Thus, one defining characteristic of the genre is change. Characters not only experience drastic changes in themselves, but also learn the tools to cope with the changing aspects of their worlds. When the term, Young Adult, was first coined, “it

referred to realistic fiction that was set in the real...contemporary world” and was used to address “problems, issues, and life circumstances of interest to young readers” between the ages of “approximately 12-18” (Cart NP). Young adult fiction allows for a developing protagonist to help young tweens go from children’s fiction to adult fiction, better preparing them for the adult world. In other words, it is a transitional period in a person’s life, wherein a child is the most exposed to multiple ideologies, developmental movements, and maturities. My project will look into the nature of Young Adult literature and will consider the ways in which it shapes the minds of young people, helping them grow into adults who can make informed decisions. I will be focusing on YA literature and how it helps assist in a person’s mental, emotional, and physical growth as they develop into adulthood. I will be focusing on Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and A.G. Howard’s *Splintered* as examples of the effect YA literature has on a young readers’ mind.

Using *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and A.G. Howard’s series, *Splintered*, as examples of throughout literature, my project examines how these novels take the themes of dreaming space, violence and the maturing of the human body and turn them into wild and bizarre stories that enable children to feel more comfortable with the changes that they are encountering through their young lives. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* represents the curiosity and innocence of childhood; the beginning of one’s teenage years, the period before hormones implodes within the body, creating a litany of reactions and responses towards others and oneself. Similarly, *Splintered* represents years of change, expect in this case it is the teenage years; that period right before adulthood, when one is trying to figure themselves out, and decide where they want to go with their lives.

## Young Adult Literature and *Alice in Wonderland*

Young adult literature is a genre that refers to literature targeted to people in their teens and early twenties. This genre often describes characters who are going through various physically and emotionally life-altering transformations occurring in their bodies, and in their day-to-day lives. These books introduce mystical, mythical characters in their teens and early twenties experiencing the same changes that their readers are going through in different strange environments. This altered environment often demonstrates the characters' internal adventure to adulthood and parallels the adventurous journey that they go on. This literature accommodates young readers into the people they become, normalizing the physical and emotional changes they are going through. YA novels often use werewolves, for example, to demonstrate the physical alterations occurring within the human body to demonstrate the physical height and weight growth that happens when puberty arrives. Werewolves are a common device because it allows writers to include body hair to demonstrate the increase in hair that sprouts all over the body when puberty strikes, normalizing these changes so that tweens do not feel so awkward about their own bodies experiencing similar changes to their own bodies.

A significant example of the YA genre that helps in understanding bodily growth can be seen in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, for a multitude of reasons. One famous device in this novel is the "Eat Me" cake and the "Drink Me" potion that young Alice consumes to grow and shrink herself to fit within the various confines of the story, like doors, windows, pockets, etc. This shows the bizarre bodily changes characters go through and how it can often help explain the experience to young people. The cake and the potion and the changes that they trigger mimic the bodily changes of young readers and could reassure them about the fact of change. Another

example of these devices in YA is Alice's dreaming/dozing off while her sister studies for school because "the book her sister was reading...had no pictures or conversations in it," something a young girl like Alice would be confused by, because she is not at the age where she would be reading such books, even though she is at the cusp of it (Carroll 11, 14). Another moment where Alice has growing issues is when she witnesses the court case of the tart thief on page 90 of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. As the trial goes on, "Alice felt a very curious sensation...she was beginning to grow larger again" because her body was still being affected by the "Eat Me" cake and "Drink Me" potion she had digested in the beginning (90). The Dormouse, who she is sitting next to, tells her she has "no right to grow here" and that he is growing "at a reasonable pace...not in a ridiculous fashion like herself (90). This makes Alice feel bad as she says that she "can't help it" because she is "still growing" (90). Her meek response to the Dormouse telling her to stop growing is reminiscent of a child being scolded by their parents having done something wrong. In this way even a mouse, smaller than a child, scolds Alice for being a normal child, growing in spite of whatever situation arises. Granted, she is growing because of a magical piece of cake, but I digress. Before this section, Alice had met the Caterpillar, who gave her advice on how to grow using mushrooms that he gave her, which will be discussed later in this project.

## Carroll's Interrogation of Victorian Culture

In the year 1865, Lewis Carroll published a children's book titled *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Shortened as *Alice in Wonderland*, the story tells the tale of a little girl named Alice Liddell who falls down the rabbit hole and into a world of nonsensical, wild, backwards imaginings called Wonderland. Although it is a children's novel it is classified as a Gothic-Victorian novel. This story is classified as a Gothic novel because this genre typically has supernatural elements, Gothic vocabulary, women in distress, and women being threatened by powerful figures. This genre articulates a central fear of its culture, which in the case of Carroll's novel is the fear his culture had over a child's ungoverned imagination. Some additional Gothic themes include the use of a dreamscape, violence, and madness, and weaving wild fantasies into the psyche of children. Examples of Gothic literature would be Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*, Robert Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Most Victorian novels, not categorized as Gothic fiction have an emphasis on the present time, write about issues of conduct, have an abundance of characters, emphasize the minor troubles of the middle class, and use basic, direct language. Examples of the Victorian novel include Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. Gothic fiction frequently diverges from the generic conventions in these novels inundating the reader with supernatural situations and women in distress as listed above. In addition to writing within the Gothic genre, Carroll introduces a 'new form' of child through his story, one that daydreamed and let her imagination run wild with endless possibilities to ease her boredom of the mundane

and standard lifestyle of the children of that day were expected to follow. Carroll, thus, gives us a gothic children's novel that follows and subverts expectations for tradition. Some underlying themes his novels tackle are bodily changes, the act of getting older, and imagination. In *Alice*, the wild and figurative writings of Carroll help relate children to their own imaginations and natural curiosities, encouraging them to follow these imaginations into their adult lives.

When thinking about *Alice in Wonderland*, one gothic characteristic or theme that comes to mind is madness. Although madness is depicted as nonsensical and lighthearted, this is a serious theme. Taken to its extreme, the imagination can easily be distorted into a kind of madness. In this gothic children's novel, it is hard to determine the line between madness and a healthy imagination. This distinction is where Carroll's work comes in. Stephanie Schatz, in her article "Lewis Carroll's Dream-Child and Victorian Child Psychopathology," examines the balance between madness and imagination that Carroll exhibits in his story through dreaming and dream-states and argues that "dreaming and dream-states" were beginning to arise within the studying of child psychology, which helps Alice look more mentally unstable as a character because of her 'delusions' of Wonderland (99). She points out that Carroll's novel is written during a time that parallels the rise in child psychology. Like other gothic texts, Carroll's novel matched the anxieties and worries of the period he writes in. This meant that when theorists and scholars were examining *Alice in Wonderland* during the Victorian era, they were evaluating to see if Alice would be a suitable enough character for children to learn from, and decidedly chose the option that she was not, despite the fact that the novel became wildly popular, regardless of this decision. Schatz goes on to discuss how "daydreams or reveries" were to be "characterized as dangerous because they merged the imagination with the 'conscious mind,'" making it so that



children were madder than they seemed (100). Dreaming during the day was meant to be a sign of madness, while dreaming at night was considered as perfectly healthy.

Gillian Beer, in her recent book, *Alice in Space; In the Sideways World of Lewis Carroll*, goes into detail as to how the *Alice* books shaped a wide variety of topics and subjects. From psychology to mathematics, from language theory to philosophy, the *Alice* novels have impacted a number of subjects through their stories. As Beer states, “the *Alice* books explore profound affinities with childhood experience” whilst also being “preoccupied with ‘rules’” delighting in finding rules “as well as reversing them” (2). These rules helped explain to Victorian children what was acceptable and what was not. The *Alice* books also allowed for a new outlook upon the English language, whilst introducing new psychological theories into psychiatry, such as the “‘Alice in Wonderland syndrome’...in which the patient experiences the body or the body parts as shifting shape and scale, and where near and far become disturbed” allowing for this syndrome to be discovered (1). According to the National Library of Medicine, the Alice in Wonderland Syndrome, or AIWS, is a real syndrome that “describes a set of symptoms with alteration of body image” (“Alice in Wonderland Syndrome”). It is an “alteration of visual perception” that alters the image of the body via “the sizes of the body parts or sizes of external objects” being perceived incorrectly (“AIWS”). Because of his novel, psychologists and scientists were able to discover this syndrome, especially in young children, and find a way to cure it.

Despite these miraculous and wonderful psychological discoveries made because of his novel, Carroll’s story has a humbler beginning than some may know of. It was originally a story that Carroll told to a family friends’ children about a little girl named Alice, and the adventures she went on. Lewis Carroll’s novel was inspired by a story that Carroll had told to the Liddell

sisters and had originally titled “Alice’s Adventures Underground.” He gave the story to Alice Liddell as a gift for her birthday (“Power Struggle...in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*” Aihong Ren). He was at a picnic with the Liddell family when the girls had asked him to tell them a story; he told a story which he based on Alice Liddell, the youngest of the Liddell girls (Ren NP). He created a wacky and wild story about a girl called Alice, and recreated that story onto paper, and published the novel in 1865. According to Ren, “Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* remains one of the greatest classic works” for children and adults alike “since its publication in 1865.” The book played an impressive and important part not only in Victorian literature, but it also played a significant role in young adult literature, because of the never-ending changes and challenges Alice encounters through her adventure in Wonderland. Ren goes on to discuss how Carroll differs from other Victorian authors because he “exposes and challenges the power relationships of adult/child” whilst also portraying “the struggle of power between the adult and child,” sympathizing with little Alice who has been “thrown into a mad and disorderly world of adults” (Ren NP).

Carroll was able to undermine the Victorian teachings that lessons are always to come with a moral code or value that children must live by something they had to learn in the lessons they received in school or from governesses. By having characters that would fly off the handles of his pages, gallivanting across an unbridled, rowdy land following its own rules and regulations he was teaching his young readers that children could be more uninhibited within other aspects of their lives, such as their minds. He also allowed them to expose themselves to danger without fetishizing safety. In her article “Violence in the Poems in the Alice Books and Lewis Carroll’s Intended Audience,” Ghani Rahman believes that the poems within Carroll’s novels “highlight the violence perpetrated by adults that children must be aware of” so that when they grow older,

they can avoid it (1). The viewpoint that Rahman offers is a warning and an invitation for those wanting to read *Alice in Wonderland*. There are several dangers and adventures that Carroll offers through his story. From children then to children now, Carroll's novel continues to both frighten and intrigue children and adults alike with its dream-like metaphors and long-lasting images. Rahman claims that when she was reading Carroll's novels as a child, she felt "frightened when [she] imagined [herself] in Alice's place. [She] felt unable to confront the weird creatures...frightened by the way the adult human figures...behaved," fully immersing herself within the books (1).

Something that stands out most from Carroll's novel would be the use of hallucinogenic drugs mentioned throughout the story. When Alice meets the Caterpillar, he is sitting in a giant mushroom, "about the same height as herself...smoking a long hookah" (35). The innuendoes in this section alone are plentiful. For starters, he is sitting on a mushroom, a well-known hallucinogen during this time period and current day. His smoking a long hookah on this mushroom signifies a highly popularized and sought after flower that the people of this time were ingesting into their systems at this time, specifically in England. Opium was a popular, yet secretive commodity that the English people sought from China, among other precious goods, like silk and rice. Carroll including this into his novel is a deliberate marker to connect Victorian reality to his fantasy. Children would not know about their parents smoking or would not understand what it is that they were smoking if they saw it, so Alice's reaction of completely ignoring the Caterpillar's habit is of no surprise. Adults reading this story would be able to relate to the Caterpillar because he portrays their daily activities, and he was the voice of reason for Alice, the parental figure. He represented the 'adult figure,' or the guide in Alice's journey through Wonderland, much like how the adults reading this story to their children would be the

guide and parental figure for their children. The chapter that he comes in for is even titled “Advice from a Caterpillar,” which could be taken as Alice needing this moment to have an adult tell her what to do, as if Carroll is connecting the idea that Alice still needs help with her journey in life, the way adults need to help children grow into successful adults. By having a smoking caterpillar on a mushroom, telling a child the rules and laws of Wonderland, Carroll is demonstrating how opium and other drugs are being abused by adults of the time, calling them out for their behaviors and for potentially spreading this immoral behavior onto the youth of the day. When the Caterpillar teaches Alice how to shrink and grow using the mushrooms around him, “remarking... ‘One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter’” he is encouraging her to grow on her own, with a little bit of parental guidance to help her learn (43). On the other hand, this could also be seen as an adult teaching a child how drugs work, but that would lead into a different and darker path than my project is intending to, so I will move on. The entirety of the conversation between Alice and the Caterpillar gives the impression of an older sibling teaching their younger sibling the ways of the world, especially in the way the Caterpillar responds to Alice’s attitude in the same response she gave him. For many of Alice’s questions, the Caterpillar either responds with “I don’t know” “I don’t see” or he gives her helpful advice, such as “keep your temper” to encourage more spontaneous reactions out of her (37, 38, 43).

In addition to explicit bits of advice that the Caterpillar gives, Carroll’s world also includes fantastic elements as a rhetorical strategy by which he, as a writer of fantasy, can undertake a critique of his world. This method de-familiarizes the elements of the real world that he wishes to critique. The mushroom is one such fantastical element that helps Carroll set up his critique of hallucinogens such as opium. Given this strategy, it is productive to consider the

views of Réka Kormos who, in her article “Western and Eastern Fantasies: Possible Worlds and Isekai in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*” speaks about an Isekai. Isekai is a Japanese term that translates to ‘otherworld’ or ‘different world.’ It is a subgenre of literature that explores world theories, allowing for Kormos to demonstrate the similarities and differences between Carroll’s work and Isekai. Kormos claims that Carroll’s novels are “able to capture the attention of both children and adults,” (84) because they are “often referred to as philosophical goldmines” (84). Kormos goes further into this Isekai theory by providing background on Isekai and how it made it possible to open up the world of imagination as a way of understanding the real. She states that “readers do not necessarily need to have a similar cultural or social background; the works provide them with the information they need to analyze and find pleasure and joy in the stories, and that is precisely how they can reach a wider audience” (85). Her outlook on the world of imagination is inspirational and intriguing because it helps readers gain a new take on Carroll’s novel that they may not have heard of or seen before. According to Kormos, “the idea of falling into a fantasy world makes it much easier for children to fantasize about a journey similar to Alice’s. This is one of the reasons why Alice is a perfect example of a fairytale heroine. She has a body that can perform miraculous deeds, she is easy to accept, and she becomes everything a child could wish for” (87), which helps Alice more relatable as both a character and as a person for children and adults alike to look up to. This also makes Alice a perfect role model for a child given to imagination and fantasy.

## Carroll's Feminization of Wonderland

Through his novel, Carroll used the travel narrative, a trendy style of writing in the Victorian era, to undertake a critique of imperial culture. In her article "Dangerous Alice: Travel Narrative, Empire, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*," Emma Graner speaks about how *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* represents the world Alice explores relating the Victorian travel narratives. She argues that readers need to be alert when looking at Alice because the novel offers a satirical look at nineteenth-century travel narratives and how they observed other cultures. Graner also mentions how Carroll uses death and violence in his novel and takes a further in-depth look into how females are viewed in Carroll's novel, which can be a reflection into how that gaze is replicated in Howard's series. One instance where Graner looks into death and violence in *Alice* would be the jokes that Carroll includes over death and Alice's fear of it, and her stating that "the text's camouflaged death threats are accompanied by humor and absurdity" a technique that enables Carroll to partially cloak the threat while also drawing attention to it (NP). Carroll introduces the ubiquity of death in Wonderland before Alice has even finished falling down the rabbit-hole, as Alice puts the empty marmalade jar into a cupboard because "she did not like to drop the jar, for fear of killing somebody underneath" (10). She also states that *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is trying to undermine Victorian Imperialism by "revealing that is it the British colonizer, not the colonial subject, who poses the greatest danger to himself and to others," (Graner NP). She goes into the history of what was going on in Carroll's time, such as this argument over primitive societies and how they viewed women. She does this by providing an anthropological article that states how "marriage in primitive' societies was achieved though the capture of women by men from other tribes, which was necessitated by the practice of female infanticide" which meant that women were valued as objects that men

could dispose of at any time (NP). Graner backs this up with further evidence by stating “Female infants...were killed as a result of the greater value of sons for defending the tribe and searching for food” proving that females were not valuable by men or society in primitive times (NP). She rescues this train of thought, however, by declaring that there are “ancient societies [that] traced kinship through the female bloodline because general promiscuity in the tribe prevented...[a] determination of paternity. More advanced societies then moved towards a patrilineal organization” (NP). One of the phrases in this section of the text really caught my eye was when Graner describes “the ultimate feminization of Wonderland” as “a matriarchal society, ruled by a vicious, insane Queen” who shrieks for people’s heads to be cut off (Graner NP). As a further in-depth over feminization in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* Graner presents this claim that “Carroll presents an exotic world that is decidedly feminine and savage” (NP). Despite the exaggerated domesticity of Wonderland, however, “Carroll steadfastly refuses to recognize this female world as nurturing... [The Queen] is the antithesis of the maternal feminine figure, calling for the summary execution of everyone she encounters, dominating her husband...she is terrifying but oddly ineffectual” because of how little power she actually has over her subjects (Graner NP). When combining Graner’s analysis of fatal feminine figures in Carroll’s novel and my connection to Queen Mary, the outcome of Carroll’s depictions of women come to one conclusion: a negative look into Carroll’s view of women. This does not mean that Carroll is being misogynistic, per se, just that he could be trying to demonstrate the state of mind that some women were in. Hysteria, or women’s disease, was a mental illness that occurred in women who had either become mothers or were severely abused by their families. Whatever the reason, these women would lash out in mysterious ways of violence towards others, self-harm, suffer severe bouts of depression, and fainting. As a whole, Victorian society declared that “a woman’s

primary role was simply to bear children and do the housework” which, for some women was not what they wanted in life “so anyone who deviated from this ideal was often deemed mad” because of the fact that women were seen as nothing but weak, helpless figures, so they could not do anything outside of housework (Boyle NP). Because of societal pressures, women were often seen as objects that were better suited in the house than for doing actual labor. In Carroll’s novel, however, women have an entirely different role than the one assigned to them in real life.

Graner comments on Carroll’s critiques of Victorian culture, the proof being in how a mother is represented in his novel. The scene being spoken of would be when Alice encounters a Duchess with a crying baby, one would think this to be a normal, caring scene of affection between mother and child, only to be the exact opposite of that. In caring for her child, the Duchess cares for her child by singing him a song about beating him, quote “Speak roughly to your little boy, and beat him when he sneezes,” “tossing the baby violently up and down, and the poor little thing howled so,” whilst “giving it a violent shake at the need of every line” instituting in Alice a need to ask the Duchess to have more care for her own child, feeling pity and fear for the child (50). When the Duchess asks Alice to care for the baby, she tosses the child at her, which Alice struggles to hold and nurse him she decides to take the child away with her, because “they’re sure to kill it in a day or two” (51). Upon this decision being made, the baby transforms into a pig within her arms, forcing her to drop it, where it “trots away quietly into the wood” (52). This scene is one example of the societal pressures on young girls to care for young children, preparing them to step into motherhood, an expectation from society. When Carroll included this scene into his novel, he was connecting it to the societal standards of young women in the Victorian era.



Another moment when he connects the societal pressures of women and girls during this time would be how he represents female adult figures in the story. The Queen of Hearts, for example, is a violent tyrant who is quick to chop off the heads of those she deems incompetent. When the Queen and Alice first met in her courtyard, the Queen “screamed ‘Off with her head’” because Alice gave her an attitude over a simple question (65). After this, Alice and the Queen play a game of croquet, with flamingoes as the mallet and hedgehogs as the ball, wherein the Queen frequently yells out for this creature to get their head chopped off and for that person to get their head chopped off (67). This indicates to Alice that the Queen is not an adult she can trust, and that she must find someone that can help her escape from the Queen. The Queen’s temper and impatience are a testament to the actions of one such queen in English history, who would easily have people killed for conspiring against her. Queen Mary, or Bloody Mary as she was nicknamed, was one of the bloodiest queens in English history for the persecution of hundreds of Protestant heretics. This demonstrates to future and current readers that Carroll was well aware of English Royalty, and that he was keeping up with the events of his time, as well as paying homage to the royal lineage in case the English monarchy were reading his work.

During this flamingo-hedgehog croquet match, the king, queen, and executioner start having an argument over how best to execute a floating head (the Cheshire Cat). It starts with the executioner arguing “that you couldn’t cut off a head unless there was a body to cut it off from,” whilst the king argues “that anything that had a head could be beheaded” (69). When the Queen puts her two cents in, she states “that if something wasn’t done about it in less no time, she’d have everybody executed, all round” (69). The whole argument stemmed from Alice talking to her friend, the Cheshire Cat, who had come to visit her in the Queen’s castle, asking how she finds the Queen (67-68). The King spies this, and immediately wants Cheshire executed and/or

removed from the Red Court, hence the start of the argument. The fact that this logical argument takes place in front of Alice hints towards not only the indecency of the adults in the story, but also towards the fact that they may view Alice as an adult herself, hence why they feel the need to have an argument like this in front of her. It also could be because all of the adult or adult figures in the novel - excluding White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat, and the Caterpillar – mistreat children, tending to not care for them, which is why having a violent argument such as beheading in front of a young girl is normal to the creatures of Wonderland. Because of this the aforementioned Duchess gets accused and put on trial for stealing the tart although she had nothing to do with it. This scene helps to illuminate that there are no children in Wonderland itself. The only child truly mentioned or discussed throughout the story outside of her sister is Alice, something that Howard notices in her novel and puts further emphasis on.

### Contemporary Alice Narratives: *Splintered*

Since its publication, *Alice in Wonderland* has been told through countless social platforms. Such platforms include multiple movie franchises, video games, horror movies, and novel concepts that use the story as its base. For example, Disney made a movie series on the stories, keeping their namesakes as the titles for the movies, with Tim Burton as the director. The channel, ABC, had a television series called “Once Upon a Time,” where they had an entire season dedicated to *Alice in Wonderland*, personifying the characters as normal human beings who have Wonderland versions of themselves. Additionally, author Marissa Meyer published a book about the Queen of Hearts, titled *Heartless* in 2016. Further, Tim Burton made a movie series based on the books in 2010 and 2016, named after the books:



Figure 1 Adult Alice, shrunken, in the Wonderland Forest



Figure 2 Adult Alice meeting The Caterpillar in the mushroom garden



Figure 3 Shrunken Alice at the Mad Hatter's tea party



Figure 4 The Queen of Hearts playing croquet with her court, being handed a flamingo to hit the hedgehog ball



Figure 5 The Cheshire Cat floating above Alice

These images of Burton's film de-familiarize the cute, cuddly depictions of the original novel. They recode the innocence of childhood, revealing the creepier side to this narrative.

In addition to the adaptations, the literary scene after Carroll published his novel has not been the same either. Countless re-writings, research papers and theories have proliferated since its initial release. The reason for this being that Carroll blurred the lines between sense and nonsense; reality and fantasy; normal and supernatural. In the various poems Carroll has throughout the story, one that has stuck out most would be his *Jabberwocky* poem because of its nonsensical language and giddy attitude towards death:

### Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!

The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun

The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;

Long time the manxome foe he sought—

So rested he by the Tumtum tree

And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,

The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,

Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,

And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through

The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!

He left it dead, and with its head

He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?

Come to my arms, my beamish boy!

O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”

He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.

What is remarkable about this poem is its use of nonsense words in a way that perfectly mimics and replaces the real language that we are all familiar with. In his article “Ambivalent Texts, the Borderline, and the Sense of Nonsense in Lewis Carroll’s *Jabberwocky*,” Michael Templeton reveals that Carroll by his use of nonsensical language is able to examine a “border region where a text widely regarded as a children’s text” is able to operate with “linguistic mechanisms” that are able to go further than their intended use (2). Templeton argues that Carroll is using nonsense verse as a form of sophisticated language to connect “children’s stories that dwell principally in the fantastic” to “adult texts that engage in complex semantic games” (2). He is able to combine complex literary techniques and a child’s wild imagination to form a colorfully complicated piece of art that has scholars debating the meaning of its years after its publication. Templeton also states that “children’s literature...contain implicit meanings that require external intervention to fully grasp” and “operates with linguistic mechanisms that far exceed its obvious content” (2). It allows for “nonsense language and poetic forms [to] reveal something critical about the use of language in literary texts more generally” (2). He claims that nonsense language “offers an examination of Lewis Carroll’s *Jabberwocky* as a notable example of a literary text” that bridges the gap between children and adults when reading this text. Readers are able to read this poem as children and adults, still being challenged at both these stages in their life. When

Templeton speaks of how “these texts reveal a border area in literary analysis” where “the line between children’s stories... and adult texts that engage in complex semantic games” he is able to demonstrate how each genre of literature differentiates between the two; how adult texts are meant to make the brain compete with itself in order to find the true purpose of the story, whilst children’s stories are meant to “dwell principally in the fantastic,” teaching kids about the fantastical, imaginative side of life (2).

This point is confirmed by Réka Kormos who argues that Carroll’s novels are “able to capture the attention of both children and adults,” (84) because they are “often referred to as philosophical goldmines” (84). Both of these stories help children, through their otherworldly dreaming and dark images, to express themselves in new and alternative ways. They allow kids and young teens to explore their own minds and bodies through their creative languages and interactions. They also appeal to the violent, creepy nature that kids of this age seem to enjoy. By having these moments in both novels, these kids are able to satisfy that craving for the strange, bizarre, and bloody. Carroll’s novels are able to tutor children and adults’ lessons through their messages on Victorian culture. He is able to bring the two sides of the spectrum of human life together with his novels. When comparing the adaptations to the original stories, the adaptations refer more to Young Adult literature than to these ideals as they encourage their young readers to act more upon their soon-to-form adult instincts than their child minds.

## Howard's Bridge Between Two Worlds

I now turn to a key retelling of the *Alice* novels in contemporary times. My focus is on a *New York Times Bestselling* series, *Splintered*, which is about a young girl named Alyssa Gardner who goes on an adventure of self-discovery told through the lens of supernatural and mystical means. It is a YA novel that introduces numerous themes of adulthood, such as puberty, sexual maturity, aging up, romantic relationships and emotional connections. Howard teaches her readers about the teenage human body – how these changes can in turn aid in the emotional and mental development of her young readers who go from child to adult. Her use of metaphorical and literal imagery helped to bring her creation to life through dark themes and dark language, like Carroll's Victorian novel. Through these themes, Howard was able to create a modern-day Gothic Victorian novel, which brought childish themes into the adult world. Through her series, A.G. Howard was able to re-create and re-imagine Carroll's novel through the lens of a young teenage girl experiencing the pains and complications of growing up.

In her interview with *USA Today*, A.G. Howard talks about her inspiration for the series. She states that when writing the first book, she had “to do some meticulous outlining, especially for the Wonderland scenes, because all of the "messes" Alyssa has to fix and the riddles she must solve would've been difficult to keep up with otherwise.” Howard describes being inspired by these riddles and Carroll-esque Wonderland scenes and she incorporates these as challenges or lessons within the novel. This is what connects the two novels together. Howard also mentions how “the actual idea for *Splintered* came to [her] when [she] went to see the Tim Burton and Disney *Alice in Wonderland* adaptation” and seeing as she is “very visual...the techno-colored cinematography imprinted so vividly on [her] mind, that [she] started playing out [her] own



Wonderland continuations and scenarios” (Chase NP). This tells us that her books would be just as colorful and expressive as the films. Howard also states that “it was important to [her] to pay tribute to (Lewis) Carroll's masterpieces and hopefully lead new readers to them, which meant lots of research” incorporating details “from his original stories throughout certain scenes by having Alyssa use his books for comparison against the Wonderland she was discovering, and to help her solve riddles (Chase NP).” We see this on pages 90 and 91 of *Splintered*, when Alyssa discovers the rabbit hole and uses the ‘Twas Brillig Jabberwocky poem to figure out how to get into Wonderland (Chase NP).

Howard pays homage to Carroll’s original story by having Alyssa follow Alice’s footsteps for most of the novel. She also includes scenes where the two novels intersect. One such space would be when a character named Morpheus has Alyssa in his bedroom, and the two are watching a live chess game unfold between them. In this scene, Alyssa and Morpheus are floating in the air, with jade chesses floating with them, depicting when the Queen of Hearts, or the Red Queen, was on trial for not looking after Alice being in their world because “Alice entered our world through the rabbit hole, which is in the Red province, and because [Red] failed to capture [Alice] before she unleashed her mortal mischief over all of Wonderland” (175). In Carroll’s novel, the trial that originally takes place was over who stole the Queen of Heart’s tarts because “The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts, all on a summer day: The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts, and took them quite away” (Carroll 89). The fact that Howard changes the names of almost every character in Wonderland while echoing the original name speaks to how she was making the novel her own. Her making the Queen of Hearts the Red Queen tells readers that the characters that they knew as children are echoed here but to different effects.

It is also through this method of name-changing and allusion to the original story that Howard ‘ages up’ her story, advancing the fact that this series is meant to be a more adult version of the *Alice in Wonderland* story than the one you knew whilst still appealing to the child within. Like Tim Burton’s adaptation, this novel helps to encourage readers to view the Alice story that they once knew from a different point of view, from the eyes of an older, more mature viewpoint. The biggest difference between Carroll’s story and Howard’s novel is that she makes her protagonist related to the denizens of Wonderland. Alyssa is descended from the Red Queen. When she was a child, the Red Queen steals Alice while she was running away from the queen and towards the Caterpillar, i.e., Morpheus, for help. She traps Alice in a bird cage in a cave and shapeshifts into Alice. The Red Queen is then taken into the human realm, where she lives out her days as Alice Liddell, until she is forced back into Wonderland by Morpheus when she is an elderly woman, who switches the Red Queen and Alice back into their rightful places. This means that Alyssa is the rightful heir to the Red Kingdom, which makes her a Netherling princess. By making Alyssa part of Wonderland, instead of an outside source like Alice, Howard is able to re-create Wonderland as Alyssa’s inheritance. This makes sense as Alyssa, like many young adult readers, has symbolically inherited Carroll’s Wonderland. This significant change even further bridges the two texts together by making the world of *Splintered* more real to her readers. We are being given a window or a way back into the wonderful, wild world of Wonderland with important differences from the original. On the cover of Howard’s novel, it even says “Welcome to the Real Wonderland” which is an indicator of how young readers are meant to view *Splintered* as “the real” tale of Wonderland. This allusion encourages readers to become familiar with Carroll’s novel and its themes while also preparing her readers to break from the limitations of age-appropriate topics and period in Carroll’s novel. Howard’s novel

reveals darker, wicked, adult truths from within. This is another way in which she ages up the Wonderland you once knew. Howard builds a more advanced, mature tale of Wonderland, and in the next section I will discuss that this “aging up” of Alice is accomplished.

### ***Aging Up Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Through Splintered***

Howard is able to connect Carroll's Wonderland to her Wonderland by depicting familiar gothic themes in advanced ways. She does this by choosing to "age up" the otherwise 'innocent' world of Carroll's Wonderland. Aging up in Howard's novel is represented in multiple ways, including emotional and mental maturity, and themes of bodily growth and development. This includes the relationships between each of the characters and the growth that they all endure throughout the series. Aging up also refers to how each character goes through a more horrific description than what we as readers of Carroll are used to. An example of this would be the figure of the White Rabbit. In Carroll's story, the White Rabbit is a white rabbit that wears a red vest and carries a pocket watch and is constantly on the go. In Howard's novel, the White Rabbit is no longer the cute, fluffy companion that you once knew. He is no longer a rabbit, and his name is Rabid White. He has antlers instead of ears and is about the size of a rabbit. His body has been burned off so that all that is seen is bone, with just his head still having skin attached. He speaks like Yoda, "At your service be I, fair queen" with glowing pink eyes and a long red coat that drags behind him (301). The transformation of the cute white rabbit to the burnt hybrid Rabid White is an advanced image that may appeal to older audiences.

Through descriptions like these, Howard is able to create a more realistic, and horrifying version of Carroll's sweet characters, despite the fact that Carroll's characters are not particularly sweet themselves. When Alyssa dreams about Wonderland, she dreams of Alice's last moments in Wonderland. She herself is Alice, running "across a chessboard in Wonderland, tripping over jagged pieces of black and white" (Howard 7). In this dream, she is "in a blue dress and lacey pinafore, trying to escape the ticktock of the White Rabbit's pocket watch" (7). When she sees the White Rabbit, "he looks like he's been skinned alive – nothing but bones and bunny ears" her

mind combining the Carroll novel with the real Wonderland making itself known subconsciously in her brain (7). Because there are no children in Wonderland, there is no imagination or creativity freely being displayed. No imagination means no creativity, which means no dreams. From dreams, spans all imagination, which is commonly started in one's childhood. This is another difference that Howard notices for her novel. In Howard's novel, Wonderland is run on dream magic, which means that if there are no dreams, there is no Wonderland. Because of this, characters such as the Wonderland monarchy and the Twid Sisters must find ways to appease Wonderland's hunger for dreams by stealing a child or stealing children's dreams to fortify the foundations of Wonderland. Children's dreams also soothe the spirits of Wonderland, helping to assist in Wonderland's magic as well. By taking old, forgotten children's toys, "toys that were loved to death" and keeping Netherling spirits in them, the Twid Sisters are able to keep them from wreaking havoc among the living Netherlings "to keep the dead contained here, so they'll not possess the living," whilst supporting the life magic of Wonderland (282, 286). When Sister One tells Alyssa the reason for the toy graveyard she comes across in Sister Two's section, Sister One tells her that "only toys from the human realm can be chosen, and only the most beloved of the lot" because they are "accustomed to being filled with hopes and dreams and all the affections their children pour into them" (288). This is "the essence of a soul. Hopes and dreams and love. When the most cherished toys are abandoned in junkyards and trash heaps" which means that they are "deprived of those things that once filled and warmed them" (288). Like real, living creatures, these toys "become lonely and greedy and crave the essence of the life they once had. So, [the Sisters] send [their] pixies" grey, gremlin creatures with bulbous eyes and death-scented skin "through the portals to carry the toys down for [them], and [her] sister fills them with what they want most – souls. Like thirsty sponges, they hold on to them [Netherling

spirits] with every portion of their strength and will” (289). By trapping these souls in these toys, they are able to live a symbiotic life together, feeding these toys with what they want most whilst ensuring the safety of living Netherlings. A section like this does not exist anywhere in Carroll’s novels, which is how Howard is able to make the story her own and advance it for mature audiences. In this way, she is maturing Wonderland into something that an older generation of readers would be able to comprehend, much like what she has done through her changing the looks and names of the Carroll characters.

The relationship between Morpheus and Alyssa is another instance of “aging up” in Howard’s novel. When looking at the relationship between Morpheus and Alyssa, the only description that comes to mind would be mature. This means that the feelings and emotions that they have for each other are deeper than those of teenage love, like her relationship with Jeb. The boy from her hidden memory and the moth she played with are the same being Morpheus is a Netherling: “a dark and twisted race of supernatural beings indigenous to an ancient world hidden deep within the heart of the earth. Most use their magic for mischief and revenge, though a rare few have a penchant for kindness and courage... While wreaking havoc in the mortal world, Netherlings stay connected to their kind by using plants and insects as conduits to the nether realm [Wonderland] (22). Netherlings are meant to tie in the two worlds that Carroll creates in his novel and the world that Howard has created within her series. They are both filled with a child’s imagination yet are contaminated by the adult’s mind. Netherlings are “denizens of the nether realm... a dark and twisted race of supernatural beings indigenous to an ancient world hidden deep with the heart of the earth” (22). The intrigue and the desire she feels inwardly towards this mysterious creature contains a multitude of complex emotions that equate to how she feels for him. This could be because of the fact that she is no longer a child looking at her

playmate, but a woman looking at a potential romantic partner. The growth in emotions for each other is demonstrated when Morpheus is helping Alyssa heal an injury she sustained from a previous section in the novel and uses the maze shaped Netherling birthmark to do so. He rolls up “his shirt’s cuff to his elbow” exposing his “matching birthmark at his inner forearm” (167). This triggers Alyssa’s intrigue, so she “grasp(s) his wrist with one hand, tracing the lines with the other” (167). Alyssa’s desire to touch the matching mark comes from her unnamed desire to make Morpheus flustered. She is exploring a part of her old playmate that she has not seen since their shared childhood, thus inciting a new curiosity for Alyssa. His reaction to the touching, however, tells a tale of adult desire. When “his features shift...a rumble escapes his throat...His arm tenses, as if it takes his full concentration not to move while I appease my curiosity” because each of them is affected by the other’s touch (167). The reactions Alyssa and Morpheus have towards each other indicate that there is more going on between them than initially realized. By the end of the novel, their attraction towards each other is acknowledged by them both, because he has awakened the woman within Alyssa, telling her that she “is a woman now, with the fire of the nether-realm coursing through [her] veins” meaning that she is grown-up now, no longer the scared child she once was (361). Even in the way they say good-bye “an invisible cord drawn tighter between [them] – a bond strengthened” speaks to the newly formed romantic bond formed between them (362). The reason for their parting being that he is returning to look after Wonderland whilst she finishes her high school education in the human realm (362). This romance amplifies the themes of Carroll’s original novel and appeals to older readers of Howard’s work.

In contrast to Alyssa and Morpheus’ relationship, Jeb and Alyssa’s relationship characterizes the experiences of first love for young adult readers. Much of these novels recount

Alyssa's feelings for Jeb, the bad boy next door trope, and their intense friendship. Having fallen in love with him as a child, we learn that the two grew up in the apartment complex across from each other, grew close and were always together (Howard 17). When she experiences her first kiss with Jeb, he has her pinned to the wall which causes "a fluttery feeling fills [her] head" and when he kisses her, "a spark, hot and electric, jumps between [them]" different to the emotions she feels with Morpheus (190-191). Jeb also tells her that he knows she is not "a kid anymore...Because there's nothing brotherly about the way [she] makes [him] feel" (191). His reaction towards her equates to her emotions for him, with "six years of secret desire. Six years of denying that he's the orbit of [her] world" they each felt for the other (191). Such descriptions of "secret desire" show us a new template for the Wonderland story. Alyssa must experience the challenges of first love and interpret who a suitable romantic partner may be.

There are more places within the novel that depict the emotions they have for each other, but the clearest moment of affection for each other is when Alyssa is about to be crowned Queen of the Red Court, and Jeb ends up sacrificing his whole body into a jabber lock box to help free the Ivory Queen to help Alyssa stop the Red Queen from possessing Alyssa's body (333). A jabber lock box "can hold an entire being within, though only the face appears...its occupant can be seen but not heard. Their jabbers are locked away" (199). In Howard's novel, this is meant to represent the saying "Off with their heads," that little Alice grossly misunderstood. In this novel, it was the "standard punishment in Wonderland" but is now considered too barbaric (199). The incantation on the side of the pewter box states:

Behold the box of jabber lock's, the fairest rests inside. But free the dame and  
ease her pain to slip into her tide. An ocean red from bonds of love, and paint the roses'



hearts thereof, applied with wisps of finest strand and guided by an artist's hand. One trade of souls will shut the door, and blood shall seal it, evermore" (222).

When Jeb bleeds for Alyssa, his devotion and love for her helps to free the Ivory Queen from her imprisonment inside the jabber lock box. Despite the fact that Jeb and Alyssa argue and flirt with each other like teenagers falling in love for the first time, his dedication to her is that of a man's love; a deeper, more emotional connection that Howard displays through Jeb's actions.

Despite all the differences created by the intention to "age up" Carroll's novel, Howard's novel also provides multiple parallels with *Splintered* and *Alice in Wonderland*. One parallel is when Alyssa goes down into the rabbit hole. Alyssa's journey down the hole far exceeds that of Alice, simply because Howard seems to combine two of the Alice novels into this one to help further the story along. Alyssa gets to Wonderland via a sundial clock that stands underneath a statue of a little boy in the middle of a garden in London, England. When Alyssa first discovers that this is how she is meant to get to Wonderland, she is "sitting at the foot of the recliner with a small trove of Wonderland-related objects," finding "a tourism brochure for the Thames Sundial Trail in London" (71). The cover of this brochure has an image of a "statue of a child balancing a sundial on his head," which is an image familiar to Alyssa. This is because she saw this very statue in her dream-memory that showed her and the little blue-headed boy going down the rabbit hole through this very statue. In her recalling this dream-memory, she can see "a winged boy and a blond girl dive into a hole beneath a statue of a child that balances a sundial on his head" because she has a "sense of knowing" that overtakes her when looking into the inner-workings of the sundial (60). As she looks further into the stuffing of her dad's recliner, she discovers "an antique hair clip...with a ruby teardrop attached to its bent end; a feather quill; and a Victorian fan made of white lace and matching gloves scented with talcum and black pepper"

(71). Pepper is a hot commodity from India which enables us to think of the imperial context of the original *Alice* novels. She also finds “two snapshots of [her] great-great-grandmother Alice” alongside a “tattered paperback” book of Carroll’s book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* only for the book to have her mother’s name written “across the word *Alice*...scrawled in red marker” (71). By incorporating this almost side-by-side comparison of the two stories, readers are able to visualize Alyssa as the grown-up version of Alice, finding her way back into Wonderland with hints left to her by a dear friend and advisor of Wonderland, the Caterpillar.

Despite the nostalgic echo, Howard consistently situates her story in a darker world. Another moment that brings a more deadly look into this childhood fairytale is when Alyssa is with Sister One in her home of Netherling spirits, and they have to soothe the woken spirits with an old nursery rhyme. This rhyme, however, is darker than the original verse:

Ring-a-ring-of-roses

The body decomposes

Hush! Hush! Hush!

You’ll all tumble down.

Down, down, into the deep

Give the Twids our souls to keep.

Silent slumbers on a web

Ne’er to raise a restless head.

If we wake the First will never come

And sing us back to sleep as one.

Hush! Hush! Hush!

We're all slumbered down...

If we fail to find our rest

Sister Two will riad our nest.

She'll make us live as broken toys

Discarded by the girls and boys;

And there will no more slumbers be

For we'll be locked in misery.

Hush! Hush! Hush!

We'll all tumble down (279).

This rhyme, similar to the songs that are all throughout *Alice in Wonderland*, speaks of death in Wonderland, and how the Twid Sisters tend to them. Even between Alyssa and Morpheus, singing is a commonplace occurrence that happens. When they were children, Morpheus had produced a lullaby that would soothe Alyssa whenever she was distressed, telling her what her destiny was, which was to become the Queen of the Red Court. As a baby he would sing “Little blossom in white and red, resting now your tiny head; grow and thrive, be strong and keen, for you will one day be their queen” and then sang this “Little blossom in peach and grey, grew up strong and found your way; two things more yet to be seen, until at least you’ll be their queen” when they met again in current time (297). These changes show the increased responsibility

placed upon Alyssa in Howard's novel and show readers that *this* Wonderland has much higher stakes. Lullabies like these and the ones in *Alice* give way to dark melodies. These songs have a haunting, foreboding quality to them that warns and attracts the listener to the song. Nursery rhymes, like dark melodies, offer beautiful notes followed by evocative phrasing meant to alert children to the message that the song is affirming.

## Other Re-Imagined Novels

What Howard is doing with this series allows for readers to get a darker, more horrific look into a tale they all know well. She adapts these well-loved tales into mature stories. Adaptations of Hans Christian Anderson and the Grimm Brothers works have also seen adaptations. As we have seen in some cases, Disney has taken these dark tales and changed them into child friendly movies that children all around the world could easily enjoy and love, foregoing the original intention meant by these fairytales. In later adaptations of common stories, contemporary writers like Marissa Meyer uses these fairytales in the Lunar Chronicles – we see characters like Cinderella, Rapunzel, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood – in a science fiction series that leans into a more sinister telling of these stories. Each re-telling appeals to different audiences and age groups. As with Howard’s adaptation of *Alice* these can sometimes help new young adult readers to revisit familiar tales from a new darker, horror filled lens. Author Jack Zipes speaks of this in his book *When Dreams Came True*, where he discusses how Hans Christian Anderson “was an unusually creative and sensitive writer whose imagination enabled him to transform ordinary occurrences and appearances into extraordinary stories that open new perspectives on life” to illustrate “his own life and experiences” (119). As we all know, Hans Christian Anderson is the author of numerous famous fairytales that we have all grown up with, some being “The Little Mermaid” “Thumbelina” “The Snow Queen” and so on. What most do not realize is that these are translations of what other European authors have written that Anderson has rewritten with his own creative tale spun onto them. Anderson “turned literary motifs into provocative and uncanny stories that challenged conventional expectations and explored modes of magic realism” that he learned about from “German romantics” (Zipes 122).

He would take these original tales and “with his own original touch and personal experiences” would spin them into “unique narratives” (122).

## Conclusion

Through novels like these, YA authors are able to release a new wave of characters and adventures upon their readers by building bridges between old and new texts. In her novel, like Carroll, Howard strips away the innocence of childhood to make room for the truth of adulthood. Howard's novel advances these ideas by offering an invitation to more mature readers to find ways to connect with new versions of old stories. In stories like these, YA authors tend to keep the original creepy or foreboding messages that the original authors initially used, unveiling the hard truth of the story and its advanced themes. When we age, we find out the hard truths of life, but are able to process the information being dealt out because of the challenges, riddles, and obstacles we see the characters undergo. By reading these stories readers develop their mental and emotional maturity but can still appeal to mass audiences. This is so adults can view children's films and laugh at the "adult jokes" without them being detected by children. Generally, as children we do not have the intellectual maturity, context, or experience to grasp what the joke is saying. It is why when we watch our favorite childhood movies' back, that we understand those jokes because our mature and intellectual levels have increased. When YA authors like A.G. Howard make reimagined series like *Splintered* based on older children's literature texts like Carroll's *Alice's Adventures*, they create bonds between old and new texts and young and old readers. It also creates a more intense look into a previously restricted part of a person's development by unveiling the darker, more intimate sides of adulthood. This is why there is a need for YA fiction as a whole, because it helps soften the blow of adulthood being pressed upon a young reader, allowing that reader to grow up with a better understanding of the world they are in. Having books like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as our

foundation in childhood helps build up the creatively imaginative side of a child's brain, permitting that little reader the chance to fly off into a world of mystical wonder, introducing little bits of adult thoughts into their small minds.



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