

2

Clio Reid
Irving Middle School
2745 S. 22nd St.
Lincoln, NE 68502

Dear Mr. Carroll,

On rainy days, I love to sit on my window seat, open the window, and light a candle. Then I open my favorite book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I am transported to a fanciful world where nothing is as it seems. Wonderful Wonderland. This book taught me to live my life more lightheartedly, to have fun, and to go where life takes me.

Ordinarily, I am a tightly wound person. But after reading your book, I realized that I needed to be more like Alice. When she falls down the rabbit hole, she contemplates what will happen calmly, and stays collected. Earlier, if I had been in her position I would've been kicking and screaming. Alice is a character who simply lets it be, even in the hardest of circumstances.

I was vacationing in Barcelona, Spain last spring when I first read *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I speak semi-fluent Spanish, but being somewhere where I didn't speak the language *perfectly* was difficult for me. As soon as I closed your book, I wanted to go explore the city. I knew that instead of dwelling on the negative things that could happen while exploring, I should focus on the positives. Including the fact that I was lucky enough to be in Barcelona. I spoke to strangers and soaked in the culture of the Mediterranean, like a modern-day Alice. I remembered that good things often come in bad packages, like Alice's fall. Barcelona was my rabbit hole. It was the gateway to a new, more confident me. Alice helped me realize that I can always turn a bad day around. All I need to do is believe in myself.

After leaving Barcelona, I took Alice home with me. In the past when I've returned home, I had been perfectly content with sitting on my couch, in pyjamas, watching television. That has been my safe and effective way to generate happiness. However, when I got back this time, even this simple act was slightly displeasing. I had become conscious of the fact that I could have adventures, even in Lincoln, Nebraska. So I found myself calling my friends and planning new adventures. In that two day span before school started, I went to a vintage shop, tried rock climbing, and wandered around my neighborhood alone. All firsts for me. Ever since then, I've continued to challenge myself with new experiences. Recently, I attempted to rekindle childhood friendships. Unfortunately, it didn't work out as well as I expected it to. I started to remember why we were no longer friends in the first place. But in true Alice fashion, I didn't let that get to me.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a study on how word definitions are often relative. I appreciated the contrast that Alice experienced as she went from her structured English home to the chaotic Wonderland, where Victorian structure was nonexistent. The definition of chaos is "complete confusion and disorder". Alice definitely experienced chaos in Wonderland, just as the Mad Hatter would have experienced chaos had he suddenly arrived in Victorian England. Your book opened

my eyes to the fact that structure is not a word that can be defined, because the definition depends on your perspective on life. My idea of chaos may be another person's idea of heaven. It all depends on the norm that you are used to. The norm of Wonderland was obviously different than the norm of Victorian England. Norm is just another word whose definition is relative.

I too, have been in a state of flummox. I attended four elementary schools in four years. I moved from my all-Spanish school, to a new city and state, where I went to an everyday public school. Soon thereafter, I changed schools yet again, in the same town and this time, I skipped the second grade curriculum. Unfortunately, I did not handle the situation as well as Alice, despite the similarities in our ages. My nights were often spent sitting in my closet, reminiscing and imagining my old home. I've now learned that when change happens, to put your best foot forwards, like Alice did. She handled herself well for a young girl caught in a crazy new world. She has helped me learn how to handle my emotions in difficult situations. Alice will always be a character I can rely on for help.

Ever since soaking in your book, I have tried to look on the positive side of life, live on the edge of my seat, and not take life so seriously. When something bad happens, I don't start to panic. I try to keep things in perspective, knowing that the calmer I am, the better the outcome will be. As the Mad Hatter said, "Everyone is mad here." The reality is that life is crazy, sad, happy, spontaneous and wonderful. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* just helped me realize this.

Best Regards,

