



Don't Miss This Children's Book

PRINCESS ALYSS OF WONDERLAND

written by Frank Beddor

illustrated by Catia Chien

Dial Books for Young Readers

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Ages 8-up

30 pages

As if the original, colorful tale of ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND and its sequel --- or the countless film and theater adaptations of it --- weren't enough to delight anyone old or young enough to read or be read to, "historian emeritus Agnes MacKenzie" has found the journal of the real little girl who inspired Lewis Carroll's classic.



Read, in Alyss's own words, how one birthday went terribly, horrifyingly wrong, and she and Hatter Madigan escaped the chaos by jumping off a cliff into the Pool of Tears. Alyss ended up standing alone in a strange world called London, and that's where it all began. After a stint as a street urchin, Alyss went to an orphanage and was adopted by the Liddell family. That is where she met the author/reverend/mathematician Charles Dodgson, who became known to the world as Lewis Carroll.

Mr. Dodgson was the only person who would call our heroine by her true name, Princess Alyss Heart (the awfully unimaginative Liddells rechristened her a boring "Alice"). He took an interest in Alyss and her

adoptive sisters, and soon he had written a story about Alyss that would keep readers captivated for decades to come.

That's where everything went wrong. Alyss was indignant when she read Mr. Dodgson's story, as it mentioned silly things like rabbit holes and made no indication that Alyss, not Alice, was a princess. Luckily we have the rest of her journal here to set us all straight.

PRINCESS ALYSS OF WONDERLAND shines not in its blatant retelling (with lots of poetic license) of a classic story, but in its incredible delivery. It is a gem of a book, with real photographs of Dodgson and the Liddell sisters as well as imaginative drawings and letters in envelopes to pull out and read, as in the Jolly Postman series. Alyss is a new Eloise, with a bright outlook on even the darkest things. The only place where the book falters is in its sometimes needless notes from the "historian" who discovered Alyss's diary when they attempt to prompt what is next to come in the story.

This is a fragile book that needs to be taken care of (be especially mindful of how you unfold the Oxford map), but it will delight most little girls as well as give them a glimpse into life in mid-1800s Britain. The biggest danger is its rewriting of history and of a classic children's book that shouldn't be tampered with. With that taken into consideration, however, this is a lovely story of a vivacious little girl fighting not to lose her imagination and trying to find her place in the world.

--- Reviewed by Hannah Gómez