

## **Press Kit for ALICE'S MAGIC GARDEN**

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### **PRODUCTION INFO**

Title: Alice's Magic Garden

Author: Henry Herz

Publisher and date: Familius 9/1/18. ISBN 978-1641700320

Available at: BN.com, Amazon.com, indie booksellers

Retail price: \$16.99

Page count: 32

Genre/subgenre: Children's picture book, fantasy

### **PROMOTIONAL INFO**

In this imaginative prequel to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Alice finds herself at a gray, dreary boarding school that is decidedly up the rabbit hole. From the relentless clocks to the beastly students, Alice's world is void of color and cheer—until Alice finds a secret garden and begins tending its wilting inhabitants. When Alice's love touches an ordinary caterpillar, a lory bird, and a white rabbit, magical things will happen—and that, as you know, is just the beginning of the story. Filled with literary allusions and clever nods to its classic roots, Alice's Magic Garden is a delightful prequel that beckons an escape to the whimsy of Wonderland.

### **INTERVIEW RESOURCES**

**Q:** What were your favorite books or characters as a child?

**A:** Dr. Seuss and Where the Wild Things Are. Like most boys, I enjoyed cartoons like Jonny Quest and Spiderman. I also had picture book versions of Kipling's Just So stories and Moby Dick! I was a ravenous reader, and started The Lord of the Rings in sixth grade. That sent me down the path of fantasy and science fiction, and I'm a big fan of those genres to this day.

**Q:** What was the original inspiration for this book?

**A:** You might be surprised to hear that I didn't base my story at first on Alice in Wonderland. The original inspiration was A Sick Day For Amos McGee. My idea was to have a lonely little girl care for the plants and creatures in her backyard. Her love would then transform (or reveal) some of the mundane critters as fae – a dragonfly would transform into a tiny dragon, etc. Then the fae would care for Rosie when she gets sick. However, my editor suggested a Victorian setting to lend a dreamier feel to the story. That's when I renamed the protagonist to Alice and changed the fae to match characters from Alice in Wonderland. My editor encouraged me to create further parallels, and down the rabbit hole I went.

**Q:** This book is obviously an homage to Lewis Carroll.

**A:** Indeed. I love Carroll's whimsical made-up words in *The Jabberwocky*:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Carroll was also capable of gorgeous heartfelt language:

“Lastly, she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather about her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long-ago: and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days.”

**Q:** Why did you include allusions to the original story throughout this book?

**A:** I thought it would be nice to point out the various written or illustrated references to Carroll's work as a way to spark interest in reading a classic. And even adults who have read Carroll might not catch every reference.

## **MEDIA REACTIONS**

“The illustrations are primarily black and white until Alice enters a walled garden outside the school. Paintings in lovely pastel shades take over, and from then on, Alice's world changes. Her kindness to creatures she finds in the garden—a rabbit, a caterpillar, and a lory bird—endear her to them, and they, in turn, become characters familiar from the classic: the White Rabbit, the Caterpillar, and the Gryphon. Best of all, the magical trio promises friendship forever.” — Kirkus

“There are wonderful references to the classic tale throughout the story, and readers will fall in love with the magical realism of the garden. The artwork is colorful and calming, delightful for fairy tale fans, and the story itself is all about the power of paying it forward.” – Mom Read It blog

“This was a wonderful imagining of little Alice's even younger days and shows us just how kindness, love, and understanding has the power to transform. Readers will be delighted with the abundance of illustrations depicting her black and gray world filling in with more color than the biggest rainbow, while cherishing the story that takes our fair leading lady from mere bystander to active participant in her happily ever after.” – Insatiable Readers blog

## **BOOK EXCERPTS**

Alice lived at the dreariest boarding school in all England. The students wore stiff, grey uniforms. Great grey clocks ticked off slow, grey minutes. The drab, dusty rooms even smelled grey.

The bullies closed in around Alice. One reached for the vase.  
Alice stood her ground... But she did not stand alone.

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