



ALICE'S BIRTHDAY BUMMER

– SEL THEMES & CONVERSATION STARTERS –

Listen to the episode: <https://jonincharacter.com/alices-birthday-bummer/>

The questions on the next page are designed to encourage deep thinking, reflection and open-ended discussions about "Alice's Birthday Bummer" themes.

Summary of Story Themes and Lessons:

1. Plans don't always go the way we expect—and that's okay.
2. Even bad days can turn around with support from friends.
3. It's okay to feel disappointed and talk about your feelings.
4. Surprises sometimes come in unexpected (and silly!) packages.
5. Friendship and kindness can turn a bumner into a celebration.

Summary of SEL Themes

- Self-Awareness – Alice recognizes and names her emotions—especially sadness, frustration, and disappointment—showing kids how to identify their own feelings.
- Self-Management – Alice navigates big emotions in a constructive way, eventually choosing to give the day “one more try,” modeling persistence and emotional regulation.
- Social Awareness – Jonathan and Redge show empathy and understanding toward Alice, demonstrating how to listen, support others, and be a good friend.
- Relationship Skills – The characters work together, offer encouragement, and create a shared celebration—highlighting the value of teamwork and thoughtful communication.
- Responsible Decision-Making – Alice's choice to keep going, despite setbacks, encourages listeners to consider how flexible thinking and optimism can lead to better outcomes.

– DISCUSSION QUESTIONS –

Recognizing and Naming Feelings:

- How do you think Alice felt when the White Rabbit kept running away?
- Can you think of a time when you felt disappointed? What helped you feel better?
- What are some ways we can tell when someone else might be feeling left out or upset?
- Why do you think Alice called it a “birthday bummer”? Have you ever had a day that felt like a “bummer”?

Problem-Solving and Bouncing Back:

- What were some things that went wrong for Alice? What helped her keep going anyway?
- Redge and Jonathan said, “One more try!”—what do you think would have happened if Alice gave up instead?
- Can you think of a time when something didn’t go the way you wanted, but it turned out okay in the end?
- What are some ways to turn a bad day into a better one?

Empathy and Friendship:

- How did Jonathan and Redge help Alice during her rough day?
- What does being a good friend look like when someone is feeling sad or left out?
- Have you ever helped a friend feel better? What did you do?

Wonderland’s Wacky Wisdom (and What We Can Learn From It):

- Why do you think Wonderland is always so confusing and surprising? Does it remind you of real life sometimes?
- The Cheshire Cat said, “Any path will lead you there.” What do you think he meant? Do you agree?
- What do you think the frogs and jingle bell koi ponds say about finding joy in unexpected places?
- The Mad Hatter says birthdays are for “bummers” and unbirthdays are for fun—what do you think about that idea?

Making Personal Connections:

- What would your perfect birthday look like? What would you do if something didn't go as planned?
- If you were in Wonderland, who would you want to celebrate with and why?
- What do you think matters most about a birthday—parties, presents, or people?
- How do you like to make others feel special on their birthdays?