

In the Wilderness

Alicia C. Hayes

Name: Alicia C. Hayes

From: Glen Ridge, NJ

Bio: Alicia Hayes is a production/stage manager, an actor, a director, a writer and a teaching artist. A Jane of All (Creative) Trades, if you will. She was last seen at Summit Playhouse as Emmy in *A Doll's House Part Two*. Alicia has a few playwriting projects in development and she is so excited to be submitting for the Bake-Off challenge. In addition to writing, she is also a frequent actor for Unidentified Stage's monthly readings of 10 minute plays and Improv nights. She serves on the Board of Directors at Studio Playhouse where she directs, acts, and stage manages. You can view her full resume as well as follow all current and upcoming projects via her website: www.aliciachayes.com. Love and thanks to everyone who supports her in all her endeavors. Off we go!

Characters

Alice: Female, Late 20s-Early 30s. Alice is Hope's older sister. She is playful and dorky but very sensitive and a little temperamental at the same time.

Hope: Female, Late teens, early 20s. Hope is Alice's younger sister. She is also playful and dorky but is a lot more easy going than Alice. She doesn't understand why people overthink things.

Despite their slight but significant differences, the two sisters have a playful, silly, endearing and thoroughly committed relationship

Time

Present day, sometime in July or August.

Place

The sister's childhood home. Their mother is relocating and they are there helping move out the mother.

Note

There are some CCM songs mentioned. You can find them via a youtube or Google search using the following titles and artists: "One Way-Hillsong United", "You Never Let Go-Matt Redman" and "Lord I Lift Your Name on High-Hand motions")

(Open on Alice sitting on exterior porch steps of a house. She is holding a portable fan, cooling herself off. In the other hand, she is flipping through a notebook. Next to her is a big, unmarked box. She flips through a few pages before tearing out two pages and putting the notebook down. She reaches into the box and pulls out another. Begins to flip through it)

Hope: (offstage) Alice? Aaaaaalice!

Alice: Outsiiiiiiiiide.

(Hope enters from inside the house. She is in workout clothes with a messy bun)

Hope: Hey, I've been looking for you.

Alice: Yeah?

Hope: I thought you were in the attic.

Alice: I was and then, *(fans herself dramatically)* BLEEEEEEECH. Who moves during a heat wave? *(Hope chuckles in agreement)* I just took the box out here.

Hope: Oh, ok.

Alice: Sorry, what did you need?

Hope: I was just wondering where you were. *(sits next to Alice and dramatically lays across her lap)(in a silly voice)* You abandoned meeeeeee.

Alice: *(playfully)* Get OFF, you whore.

Hope: You left me in the dust.

Alice: *(sighing)* I'm sorry.

Hope: Your apologies fall on deaf ears.

Alice: *(laughing)* Geeeeet off mee.

Hope: Nnnnnnnnoooooooo.

Alice: Get ooooooff.

Hope: You must pay the penance.

Alice: *(whining)* It's too hot for you to be doing this.

Hope: She doth protest too much.

Alice: That is not what that quote is talking about and don't act like you like Shakespeare.

Hope: Oo, I'm sorry miss English teacher-That's Shakespeare?

Alice: Of course it is.

Hope: He's stuuuupeeeeee.

Alice: Who did you think it was?

Hope: Good ol' King Jimmy!

(Sound of ice cream truck. Hope gasps)

Alice: Oh thank god! Yes-yes-but you have to get off me.

Hope: Yes!

(Alice reaches into pocket and pulls out cash. Hope lightly smacks Alice's face and walks off)

Alice: *(calling off to her)* Chocolate dipped cone!

(Alice smiles in the direction her sister ran off. She resumes fanning herself and picks up the notebook. She flips through it, dog earing some pages. She gets bored of flipping through page by page and does a quick flip through the book. She goes back to dog ears and begins tearing them out. Hope returns)

Hope: Hey! Why are you doing that?

(Alice just reaches for the ice cream, she doesn't really hear her sister. Hope withholds ice cream)

Hope: Heeeeeeey! No ice cream.

(Alice turns)

Hope: *(slowly)* Why, are, you, doing, that?

Alice: I'm trying to salvage these journals.

Hope: Byyyyyy ripping out the pages.

Alice: Mom would use it for three, maybe four pages. If we rip out the pages, no one is the wiser and we can sell the journals at the yard sale.

Hope: But what if there's something important on those pages?

Alice: Oh my god. *(hands Hope a page)*

Hope: *(reading)* Step one, make sure everyone is off the phone. Step two, open AOL-ok. Yeah. *(pause)* That's kind of funny, though.

Alice: Then scan it or something. We're just not saving a whole journal for it.

Hope: *(knowing that Alice is getting a little annoyed and looking to tease her)* I mean, what if civilization as we know it crumbles, and technology is set back to 2002? We might need this.

Alice: Then you better scan it now.

Hope: I will.

Alice: Are you gonna help me with this or not?

Hope: Martha, Martha, eat your ice cream.

(Alice smiles fondly at Hope. Puts the book and the fan down. Takes the ice cream)

Alice: So if I'm Martha, then that makes you Jesus?

Hope: Yep.

Alice: A female Jesus. Mom is gonna love that.

Hope: You're right, that's blasphemy. You're Martha, I'm Mary, the ice cream is Jesus.

Alice: So. We're eating Jesus.

Hope: Do this in remembrance of me.

(Sisters giggle)

Alice: It's not sacrilegious if it makes ya smile.

Hope: Remember when we were quoting that at Kim's wedding and Mom was like-

Together: "That's not how that works"

(They laugh. Eat ice cream quietly)

Alice: That was a fun wedding.

Hope: It was. I miss them. They should come visit.

Alice: Maybe they'll come see Mom in the new house.

Hope: Yeah, that would be nice.

(Savoring the ice cream)

Hope: Did you really not find anything interesting in the journals?

Alice: The AOL thing was probably the most interesting so far. Most of it is just Calvary church board meeting notes.

Hope: That could be valuable to the church, though.

Alice: I mean. If "Pros and cons of switching communion wafers" is valuable then I'll scan it and send it over but *(shrugs)* I don't know if the church wants to be reminded of how monotonous they can be.

(Hope shrugs.)

Alice: Oh! I did find...*(Alice picks up a page that she had separated from the others and hands it to Hope)* It's so cute.

(Hope reads the page and starts laughing)

Hope: Aaaaaaaw.

Alice: I know!

Hope: *(Reading)* Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers...I think that says Deuteronomy...Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings-*(laughing)* Whyyyy was I just writing the books of the Bible?!

Alice: Do you not remember? *(Hope shakes head)* Grandma said she'd give you five dollars if you memorized the books of the Bible.

Hope: *(recalling)* Five dollars for each testament!! *(laughs)* Man, I was studying harder then than I do now.

Alice: I mean. Ten dollars when you're seven years old is a big deal.

Hope: Did I ever get the ten dollars?

(Alice puts up finger. She reaches behind her and pulls out an envelope, hands it to Hope)

Alice: It was in the journal.

Hope: YEEEEES. I'm rich! *(opens envelope)* Hey, there's only five in here.

Alice: I guess you only memorized one testament.

Hope: Why did I memorize the harder testament and then abandon the other?

Alice: That's probably when you started backsliding.

Hope: That's right, that's right. I left the church and became a big ol' drunkard.

Alice: Hit the bottle so young.

Hope: Don't forget about the drugs.

Alice: Ooooh, the drugs that you took.

(Both laughing. Hope folds up the paper and puts in the envelope. Pockets it)

Hope: What did you do with your earnings?

Alice: Oh, grandma didn't start the Five Dollar Testament thing until you guys came along. When I was a kid I would get a full size candy bar, any candy bar I wanted, for every ten Bible verses I memorized.

Hope: What?! That's such a better bargain! She cheaped out on us!

Alice: Suck it.

Hope: Did you at least cheat the system? Like, did you memorize "Jesus wept"?

Alice: No, I was too much of a goodie two shoes to try that.

Hope: Lost opportunity.

Alice: I know.

Hope: That's so funny that Grandma straight up bribed us to learn about the Bible.

Alice: Right? But I mean....she did make it fun.

Hope: So fun! Did she teach you the song to learn the books of the Bible?

Alice: Again, verses and candy, so no.

Hope: We sang it to the bones of the body song.

(Alice finds this exceptionally funny and laughs really hard)

Hope: *(singing)* Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges- You get it.

Alice: Incredible.

Hope: The first time I heard the bones of the body song I thought they ripped off the books of the Bible song.

(They both laugh really hard)

Alice: They were appropriating our culture!

Hope: Christian censorship!

(They laugh and it fades. Alice holds out the ice cream wrapper. Hope groans)

Alice: I paid.

(Hope takes the wrapper and goes inside. Alice picks the book back up and rips out the remaining dog eared pages. Hope returns and sits down. Alice reaches into the box and pulls out a journal, holds it out to Hope. Hope groans and falls on her back. Alice reaches over to hit her sister's leg with the journal. Hope sits back up and playfully scowls at Alice. Takes the journal and begins to flip through it.)

Hope: *(reading)* How Changing the Church Carpet Will Further the Gospel.

Alice: Ah, yes, from the Sermon on the Mount.

(Alice reaches into the box and pulls out another journal. Her brows furrow at the cover. She opens it and she appears surprised. She flips through it. As she flips through it her mouth falls open and breaks into a smile. Hope has flipped through the book and has ripped out the pages. She turns to get another book and sees her sister)

Hope: What?

Alice: This one is mine.

Hope: From when?

Alice: Early highschool?

Hope: OOOoooo, does it list all the boys you didn't kiss?

(Alice glares. Hope finds her own joke very amusing and laughs)

Alice: It's youth group notes.

Hope: Aw.

Alice: How old was...I was sixteen.

Hope: What does it say?

Alice: It looks like...it looks like they're notes from youth group but *(gasps. Looks at Hope)* It's part Prayer Journal.

Hope: You. Brought your Prayer Journal to youth group?

Alice: I guess.

Hope: Weren't you worried someone would read it?

Alice: I guess I trusted everyone in my youth group. Yeah, it looks like I would take down notes from youth group and then periodically throughout the week I would write down my prayers and reflect on the youth group sermon.

Hope: Like. How to say no to drugs?

Alice: *(Flips back)* Yep.

(Beat)

Hope: You were homeschooled. Where the fuck were you gonna get drugs?

Alice: The Devil.

Hope: Ah.

Alice: Angel of light, ya know.

Hope: Right.

Alice: Damn, I was meticulous. I would write the date...the speaker... all of the verses....bullet points...shit, I wrote down what songs we sang.

Hope: What songs? What songs?

Alice: Well....on April 15th, 2006 we sang, "One Way"

Hope: *(Fast claps)* Jesus! You're the only one that I could live for!

Alice: And...You Never Let Go.

Hope: *(singing)* Through the calm and through the storm. Oooh noo, you never let go...

Alice: And....Lord I Lift Your Name On High.

(Hope gasps. Alice looks up smiling)

Hope: That was my jam!

Alice: I know.

Hope: Wasn't that a little young for you guys?

Alice: Well, it's not like we did the motions.

Hope: The motions! The motions!

(Hope jumps up onto the porch. She gestures to her sister to join her. Alice sighs jokingly, puts down the book and joins her sister on the porch)

Hope: *(Bopping as she sings)* Lord I lift your name on high

Alice: *(soft falsetto, mimicking an echo)* Lord I lift your name on high

Hope: I'm so glad you came to save us

Alice: To save us

Hope: I'm so glad you're in my life

Alice: In myyy life.

Hope: I'm so glad to you to came to save us

Alice: Toooo saaaave uusss

Hope: Ready? 1-2-3

Together: *(Both singing and doing motions with the song)* You came from heaven to earth, to show the way. From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay. From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky, Lord I lift your name on high.

(Both break into laughter. Hope continues humming and doing the motions. Alice waves her off and sits back down on the steps. She flips through the journal a bit more)

Alice: Oh man. I really bought into this.

Hope: What do you mean, you bought into it?

(Alice shrugs)

Hope: Do you not believe in it anymore?

Alice: Oh no! I totally still believe it.

Hope: Then what do you mean you "bought into it"

Alice: I don't know.

Hope: But you still believe it?

Alice: Yeah, absolutely.

Hope: So, like, what's the difference between "I bought into it" and "I believe it"?

Alice: Look, Hope, I don't know. It's just different.

(Hope is visibly frustrated. She sits back down and picks up a new journal. She opens it and her eyebrows go up. She looks at her sister and back at the journal. She straightens up and reads dramatically)

Hope: Dear Jesus, I need to talk to you about something but it's really embarrassing. I know that my secret is safe with you. *(Alice's head slowly comes up as Hope reads)* You already know my heart and my desires and I just really am having a hard time with thinking about sex.

(Alice tosses aside her journal and lunges at Hope, who jumps up and reads as she runs around the porch with Alice in hot pursuit. The following lines overlap throughout this sibling chase)

Alice

Give it back! Hope, I'm serious, stop!
HOPE! Give it! You little bitch, now!
Please, that's not your business. That was my sexual awakening and I wasn't prepared to handle it, GIVE IT BACK, Hope. Hope. Hope. Hope. Now. Hope. You're the worst, I'm never going to forgive you if you don't give it back
Please, come on, you fucking suck
Hope, now, I'm going to get Mom if you don't give it back. Hope. Hope.

Hope

I really try not to think about it but it's really hard-Alice! That's what she said!-I believe that if I had a boyfriend I could resist temptation but these thoughts plague my heart and mind with doubt. I know it's lustful and I am just so sorry. When the trumpet sounds I want to hear you say "Well done, good and faithful servant"-I mean, he could say that about sex-and right now if that happened I'm afraid you would not say that. I ask for your forgiveness and

(Alice successfully tackles Hope)

Hope: *(reading quickly)* HELPWITHTHISISSUEILOVEYOUSSOMUCHAMEN.

(Alice snatches book out of Hope's hand and catches her breath, sitting on her sister's back. They both pant)

Alice: This. This is like when Amy burned Jo's novel.

(Beat)

Hope: *(still thinking they're joking around)* You know I didn't read that stupid book.

(Alice hits Hope on the back with the journal)

Hope: OW! JESUS!

Alice: *(getting off of Hope's back)* I'm gonna tell Mom you said that and she'll still give you a lecture. *(Alice sits down on the steps with the journals and pulls the box close to her, her arm draped across it)*

Hope: Alice! What the hell? We were just having fun. Alice. Alice, it's not that embarrassing you were just horny. I don't get what the big deal is, you talk about how much you hate Purity culture all the time, like it's kind of annoying how much you talk about it. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, you're not annoying. I just. I don't understand what I did. We were playing around and all of a sudden you change your mind and get your feelings hurt? That's such bullshit. The margin of error with you is so small, it's not my fault. How am I supposed to know what's too far and what's not when you won't be clear? Like, you should just say what's off limits instead of being vague about it. I would respect it. But ignoring me like a fucking child isn't going to make me less angry at you. Alice. Alice. ALICE.

Alice: *(sharply)* What?

Hope: *(frustrated)* What?

(They look at each other in silence for a moment)

Alice: I'm sorry. But you should have given it back when I asked you.

Hope: Fine. I'm sorry too.

(They're quiet. Hope sits back on the steps. They both look off in silence for a moment)

Hope: If it makes you feel any better, my sexual awakening was on Plugged In.

Alice: What?

Hope: That Focus on the Family movie review site.

Alice: Yeah, I know what it is but how did that spark it?

Hope: It was like, super graphic. It would take, I don't know, Bridesmaids or something and line out that opening sex scene in detail. Like, not crazy detail. But enough that I spent hours on that

site just “learning about appropriate movies” and scrolling to “sexual content”. It was. Uh. An education.

(Alice lightly laughs)

Hope: So, like, you somehow had your sexual awakening in Purity talks and mine was on a Focus on the Family site. It’s embarrassing. But now we’re even.

(They both smile at each other weakly. They’re quiet for a bit)

Alice: By the way. That’s kind of what I mean by I “bought into it”. I didn’t question anything. No. That’s not true. I guess. I just. *(gathers thoughts)* I bought into the idea that there was an answer for everything. So if I had a question, it didn’t bother me, because there must be an answer. But sometimes there’s not an answer. Like. Like that whole thing with sex. The question, “What’s the right thing to do sexually?” Their answer, “Wait until you’re married” Cool. Next question, “What do I do when I have sexual thoughts?” Answer....nothing. “Resist temptation”. I had no idea what to do. “Resist temptation” isn’t an answer but I had to believe it was. It wasn’t even just the sex stuff, it was everything. I had questions about everything and when you’re young, there’s always an answer. But then you get older and you realize that so many of the answers are actually just non answers and instead of being taught how to live with doubt within the faith you just...buy into the nonanswer. I don’t want to do that anymore. I totally still believe in Jesus. But there’s a lot more questions. My place in this culture doesn’t look like what I thought it was going to and I don’t know where I even fit anymore. But I love Jesus. And I know that I always have a place with Him. It’s just the other stuff I don’t get. I miss being a kid. I miss understanding my faith. I don’t know if I understand it anymore. But I can’t shake it. So I just keep believing it.

(They’re both quiet)

Hope: I get it. I do. I guess, it’s different for me because, for such a long time this was just a thing I did. Like, it was fun, but, ya know. It’s a culture. It meant something to me in a cultural way. I don’t mean that to sound like it’s a bad thing, Christians always make it sound like it’s a bad thing. But it’s not. The culture you come from is integral to who you are, and you may not understand every part of it, but you love it because that’s where you came from. Christianity was just where I came from. So I didn’t question everything. Kinda like I don’t question why we make lefsa on Christmas, it’s just culture. It’s a thing we do. And I loved it. I loved my culture. But now it’s actually starting to mean something more to me so I don’t know if I’m at the questioning stage yet. I’m just enjoying that it means more to me than it did when I was younger.

So, I don't really see it as "buying into it". I see it as...it's grown up with me. Maybe I'll question stuff-

Alice: You will.

Hope: I didn't interrupt you. Maybe I'll question stuff...but right now I'm just discovering what this whole faith thing is outside of just a thing that I like doing. So maybe that's...maybe that's why I take all this stuff a little lighter than you do. We're just at different places, ya know?

(Alice and Hope smile at each other. Alice moves the box over and opens up her arms. Hope moves in closer to Alice and cuddles up to her. They cuddle for a bit)

Hope: So. With all those questions. Should I break it to Mom that you've backslid?

Alice: *(silly voice)* Noooo. *(Beat)* I'm still here, aren't I?

Hope: Is that gonna be enough?

(Beat)

Alice: It's gotta be.

END OF PLAY