

# Alice in wonderland – film review essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Nineteen-year-old Alice (Aim Waxworks) escapes the crowd at her engagement party to consider whether to go ahead with her marriage to a rather boring English nobleman, and falls down a hole in the garden after following an unusual rabbit (Michael Sheen). Upon reaching the bottom of the pit she finds herself in a strange world called “ Underlay”, which resembles a place she knew as a child.

Underlay is inhabited by talking creatures in search of someone to save them from the dreaded Red Queen (Helena Bonham Carter), who has assumed control of the kingdom by beheading anyone who dares disagree with her although ironically her CGI enhanced head is twice as big as everyone else’s. With the invitation from the White Rabbit she soon encounters past friends and some new ones including, of course, the Mad Hatter (Johnny Deep), whose head dressing and piercing eyes disguises the fact that he’s suffering from mercury poisoning and hiding a tragic past.

Along the way there’s also the nonsensical twins Twiddled and Twiddled (Matt Lucas in dual roles), plus the irrepressible Cheshire Cat (Stephen Fry) with his twirling head, and many others. According to a scroll detailing a historical timeline of Underlay – including vents in the future – it is Alice who will set the kingdom free by defeating the Jawbreakers, a powerful dragon-like creature under the control of the Red Queen.

She’s strong and able to overcome just about any obstacle, each encounter, whether she’s big or small, are enchanting, exciting and full of “ wonder”, leading up to the film’s CGI-rich finale and a clash between our hero and the vicious Jawbreakers, which was impressively executed. While her character

was originally developed during another century, this Alice is clearly designed for teenage girls in 2010 to relate with. Without question the highlight of the film is the emergence of the Red Queen as her chief enemy.

Bonham Carter steals the show by making this colossal headed Red Queen look like a wickedly hilarious character especially when shouting the orders, “ Off with Their Head”. While Deep, as always, is madly funny, yet imaginative (When Alice asks “ Tell me what Red Queen has done? He replies in a petrified tone, “ It’s not a pretty story”, as if to suggest she did something nasty), and suited the character, Mad Hatter in every possible way. Voice work from the other characters: Sheen, Fry and Rickrack is exemplary.

Burton has worked with a top notch crew to deliver this cinematic masterpiece, including special effects legend Ken Ralston, Avatar designer Robert Stromberg and multiple Oscar winning costume designer Colleen Atwood, shot in AD and converted to a brilliantly vivid AD format with no graphical glitches. But ultimately it is the visual landscape that makes Lise’s newest adventure so wondrous, as technology has finally been able to catch up with Burtons creative imagination. The film is rated a PIG (blame it on the smoking caterpillar) release but may be too intense for younger children.