

**Official Interview Transcript - Drop Hammer Publishing**

Interviewer: **Katia M. Davis (KMD)**

Subject: **ALICE (A) from A Stranger in My Grave**

Purpose: **CHARACTER INTERVIEW**

Date: **24<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

**1342 [interview started]**

**KMD:** Hello Alice. I'm so pleased your mother let you come today.

**A:** Why is part of your hair short and the other long?

**KMD:** I like being different.

**A:** You can tell me if it was the lice. But those are all over your head, not just on some of it and they have little white eggs, so all of your hair has to be chopped off and they put kerosene from lanterns on your head and rub it in. Mamma says that snuffocrates them, but I don't know what that is.

**KMD:** Your mamma sounds very smart.

**A:** She is. She told me what a bosom is.

**KMD:** How old are you, Alice?

**A:** I am six years.

**KMD:** That's nearly grown up.

**A:** You are silly. Mamma told me people who ask lots of questions are silly, they should take things for what they are.

**KMD:** Well, so far we have asked one question each, and you asked the first one.

**A:** I already know I am silly. I have seen a flying girl that looks like a boy. She has short hair too, but her bosom is not as big as yours.

**KMD:** A flying girl?

**A:** She comes to my window and looks in. But Beth, she is my nanny, says she cannot be outside because my window is upstairs. Beth does not believe in flying girls. She thinks I am making it up, but she uses a different word.

**KMD:** Who do you think she is?

**A:** She visits from across the road, the place where all the dead people are.

**KMD:** The cemetery?

**A:** Yes, mamma and Beth call it that. It is very big and very old, older than mamma and Beth. People leave flowers there.

**KMD:** That's how some people remember their loved ones, they give them flowers.

**A:** They must not want them, because they never take them, they just sit there until they are all dried up and blow away.

**KMD:** Can you tell me what your favourite thing to do is, Alice?

**A:** I like to bounce on my bed. It makes Beth cross.

**KMD:** What's more exciting, the bouncing, or the making Beth cross?

**A:** Making Beth cross, of course. She is not allowed to shout at me so I bounce on the bed and then her face goes all red and then I laugh.

**KMD:** That sounds a bit mean, Alice.

**A:** But she makes me go to bed and I want to talk to the flying girl.

**KMD:** What does the flying girl say?

**A:** She tells me stories about big cities and horseless carriages that rush along the streets and ladies who wear trousers instead of hoops and skirts. I want to wear trousers, then I could climb trees all the way up to the top.

**KMD:** That sounds like something out of the theatre, Alice, or a story book.

**A:** Mamma will not let me go to the theatre. She says I am too young, but I have some story books. I have the Prettiest Book<sup>1</sup> about a magic castle that Beth reads with me so I can learn, and I have a book Daddy fetched from America that has tin soldiers in it<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Bunyano, S., (c.1800) *The Prettiest Book for Children; being the history of the Enchanted Castle; situated in one of the Fortunate Isles, and governed by Giant Instruction. Written for the entertainment of the little masters and misses of Great Britain.* Printed for J. Harris, London.

<sup>2</sup>Andersen, H.C., (1846) *Wonderful Stories for Children.* Translated from the Danish by Mary Howitt. Wiley & Putnam, New York.

**KMD:** I used to have a book with a story about tin soldiers. It was by Hans Christian Andersen.

**A:** Yes! I think it is daft to give someone a name like that, Hands.

**KMD:** That's nearly right, it's Hans, H-A-N-S. He's Danish. If he was English, his name would be John.

**A:** That is even dafter.

**KMD:** Do you see the flying girl all the time?

**A:** No, just sometimes at night.

**KMD:** Does she scare you?

**A:** She did once, but we are friends now. She says she will visit me properly soon, but she needs to make Beth see her first.

**1401 [interview ended]**