

# STUDY GUIDE



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## ALICE JUNIOR (ALICE JÚNIOR)

A film by GIL BARONI  
BRAZIL / 2019 / 95 MIN  
Portuguese with English Subtitles

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## BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a foreign film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country where that film comes from.

A research study<sup>1</sup> aimed to describe the attributes associated with the quality of life of Brazilian transgender children and adolescents according to their perception, indicated that their lives are impacted by social, physical, and mental factors, mainly due to the socio-culturally experienced stigma and discrimination.

The study established that the words *happiness* and *happy* are related to statements that portray the adolescents' joy when they feel the freedom to express themselves as they are, reflecting self-acceptance and respect of the other in relation to them. Furthermore, knowing that they are fighting for a cause reflects happiness, as they feel that they can transform the suffering they experience into joy for others in the future.

When analyzing different aspects associated with quality of life, the study identified the family nucleus as the main means of social support for transgender children and adolescents. On the other hand, the school environment was identified as the space of social coexistence where children experience situations of discrimination, preconception, and exclusion, corroborating the social stigmatization of trans-identity.

A different study that used the focus groups to measure the quality of life of healthy children and adolescents concluded that the most important aspect for children was associated with family relationships.<sup>2</sup> However, for the adolescents, the aspects considered most important were social relationships. The adolescent does not cite the family as the main coexistence nucleus, and there are more emerged issues related to the school, to the use of public places, to the places for sociability, and to the social knowledge about transgender/transsexuality, among other aspects.<sup>3</sup>

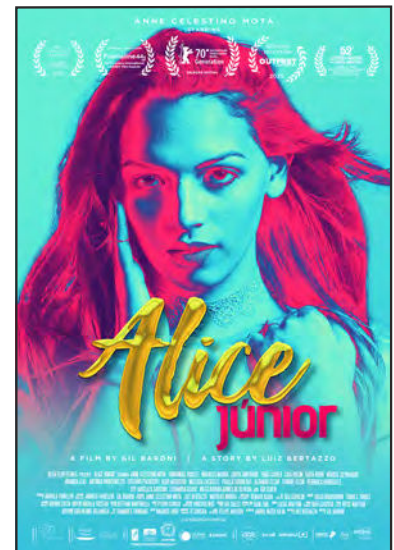
### INTRODUCING THE FILM

A **film synopsis** is a piece of text designed to summarize the film's narrative, genre, style, and key participants in a way that appeals to a wide audience. The synopsis is part of the film marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this official synopsis for *Alice Júnior*:

Alice Júnior is a carefree, spoiled trans YouTuber with everything she could ask for: an apartment in a cool beach town, a loving dad, her own advice vlog, an almost-win on Teen Top Model, and a cat named Rhinoceros. So, when her father announces their move from the vibrant Brazilian city of Recife to a small, conservative town in the south and to an old-fashioned catholic school, Alice has to prepare herself for the prudery and small-mindedness she will confront there. The teenager, however, doesn't let the initial hostility get her down. Alice releases her truest survival instinct to make her new schoolmates and teachers rethink their conservative ways and catch her long-overdue first kiss: by being loud and unapologetically herself.

With fast-moving cuts set to pop samples and sound effects, a hint of glitz, and a bagful of emojis, this coming of age gem is a breath of fresh air; a reminder that even amidst heavy socio-political turmoil stories of trans-Brazilians radiate life, joy, and infinite possibility.

Alice Júnior is a celebration of rebellious youth and offers the potential for future generations to rethink outdated perspectives of gender, sexuality, and differences as a whole.



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<sup>1</sup> Nascimento, Fernanda Karla et al. "Brazilian transgender children and adolescents: Attributes associated with quality of life." *Revista latino-americana de enfermagem* vol. 28 e3351. 6 Nov. 2020, doi:10.1590/1518-8345.3504.3351

<sup>2</sup> Detmar SB, Bruil J, Ravens-Sieberer U, Gosch A, Bisegger C, the European KIDSCREEN group The use of focus groups in the development of the KIDSCREEN HRQL questionnaire. *Qual Life Res.* 2006;15(8):1345-1353. doi: 10.1007/s11136-006-0022-zv.

<sup>3</sup> Oliveira AJB, Melo GM, Santos IMA, Alencar IM, Loures MLC. As socializações primária e secundária: quando o indivíduo sai da sua microbolha e se torna produto da sociedade. [12 mar 2019]; *Jornal Eletrônico Faculdades Integradas Vianna Júnior. [Internet]* 2017 9(1):33-48. Disponível em: <https://www.jornaleletronicofigvj.com.br/jefvj/article/view/87/611>.

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## INTRODUCING THE FILM *(continued)*

- ❑ From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film? From this same text, try to identify the main elements from the film's plot and the socio-political background to the film.
- ❑ How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- ❑ Can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about just from the marketing materials (i.e. trailer, poster, and still images)?

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## CINEMATIC ART/TECHNIQUES

- ❑ How would you best describe the cinematography of the film? How does it differ from other films you've watched that focus on the LGBTQ+ community?
- ❑ In the opening scenes of the film, the director invites us into Alice's home and her bedroom. Do you think that this technique provides us with a holistic approach to her life? Do you think that the director intended to do so? What tone does the opening scene present?
- ❑ The director utilizes various aerial shots throughout the film. What does this technique add to the narrative of the movie?
- ❑ The film includes fun and colorful animations as part of its aesthetic. What do they add to the film? Who do you think they are intended for?
- ❑ How did the color palette of the film change from the beginning to the end?
- ❑ The camera doesn't stay still, it is in constant motion even in scene where it focuses on one person at a time. What effect does the movement of the camera have on the viewer? What do you think was the purpose of this decision?
- ❑ The last scene of the film gives a close-up view of everyone's faces. Why do you think the director chose to end the film like this?
- ❑ How does the film's soundtrack support the film? Think about the beat of the music and the song's lyrics.



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## NARRATIVE

- ❑ Alice chooses the name Alice because her late mother used to read *Alice in Wonderland* to her. How does the film relate to the classic children's story? Are there fairy tale symbolisms in the film that remind you of the book's characters and narrative?
- ❑ When Alice and her father first move to their temporary home in the countryside, the owner misgenders Alice and her dad doesn't correct her. What do you think about that scene? How does his compliance to the heteronormative society impact Alice? Analyze the scene.
- ❑ How does Alice struggle with adapting to her new life? What are the different barriers she faces? Analyze two scenes that illustrate this.
- ❑ When Alice and her father move from the city away to a smaller town, how do you see the prevalence of religion change?
- ❑ Think about the different characters Alice encounters when she starts her new school. What does each of them represent?
- ❑ Do you think that the violence used against Guilherme was justifiable?
- ❑ How does the relationship between Alice and Lino change throughout the film? What was your first impression of Lino's attitude towards Alice in her first day of school?
- ❑ Throughout the film, the filmmaker showcases what the typical life of a transgender girl might be like. Do you think that this depiction aligns with reality? Do you think that transgender youth go through similar experiences or worse?
- ❑ The film includes several scenes in which Alice experiences some sort of "out of this world" dreams that include vibrant colors and distinct effects. What are the meanings of the dreams in Alice's life? What significance do these dreams add to the film as a whole?
- ❑ What do you think about the film's ending? Was it surprising to you? Why?



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## THEMES

- ❑ Would you agree that Alice's mere presence as a transgender individual at her religious high school is a form of resistance? Why or why not? Explain.
- ❑ The film tells the coming-of-age story of a teenage transgender girl trying to navigate a transphobic environment. Analyze two scenes in which Alice resists against societal standards and shows confidence.
- ❑ Alice is bullied repeatedly at her new school; how does mental health awareness play a role in the film? What message about mental health does the film make or not? Explain.
- ❑ LGBTQ+ rights in Brazil have deteriorated after Bolsonaro took office in January of 2019. What tone does the movie give in regard to the protection of transgender rights in the country? Does the movie give a hopeful tone to the future? Why or why not?
- ❑ How do you think that the government of Brazil and its citizens received the film? Keep in mind the socio-political context of the country.

