

Pulling Teeth
By Cali Grzybowski

Logline: Just when she thought things couldn't get worse at her father's funeral, thirteen-year-old Alice Chiggins enters the most grueling and overwhelming time in any person's life: puberty. Except along with cramps and the constant craving for chocolate, Alice's first period came with the ability to communicate with dead people, including her newly deceased ghost dad. Alice is thrust into her new life of period pimples and paranormal activity while her and her mother Diana are forced to navigate their new reality.



Why You & Why Now:

Pulling Teeth revolves around a melding between the supernatural and the mundane worlds. The show surrounds a young girl named Alice, who gains the ability to communicate with the spirit world after starting her period for the first time. Alice's mom is a dental hygienist, so she spends lots of time keeping herself occupied in the dental office, and she encounters different spirits along the way that guide her and help raise her in addition to her mom and her mom's co-workers. This world is full of characters to empathize with. I have a deep affinity with the supernatural realm. Since I was a young child, I've wondered what happens to people once they die, and if they do remain on earth among the living. I do believe in the paranormal, and this show gives me a chance to explore what the idea of spiritual lingering means to me. I have had my own experiences with the paranormal, and they've led me to believe that sometimes certain people can stick around and affect the lives of the living. It has kept me up at night going down the rabbit hole of "do the dead actually go somewhere after death?", "is there such thing as an afterlife?", "does a person's spirit get recycled or reincarnated?", "if there is another place for ghosts to go, how do they get there?" I still haven't found my answer, but I will be exploring a possible interpretation of what lies beyond within the show. With that in mind, I feel like these spirits must know they are still conscious. I feel strongly about the concept that ghosts are still on earth to warn, guide, or just cause some shenanigans to help make the coping process less miserable for those left to endure it.

My mother has been a dental hygienist since before I was born, and I practically grew up in her office. Her co-workers treated me like family, and they all communally looked after me even though they had their own day-to-day duties. A "work family" was an integral part of my life growing up. Since I was born, my community and environment were a giant family. My neighbors and my mom's co-workers always looked after me when my mom was busy at work. They took me to my sports practices, came to my plays, and let me mess around in their homes/offices whenever I needed to entertain myself. I keep in touch with this community today to keep them updated on my life. I grew up calling these people my aunts and uncles. This show pays homage to that sentiment that "it takes a village to raise a child".

While each person's experience with death is unique, the emotions we feel after that experience are universal. People of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances have experienced what it's like to lose someone who has made a significant impact on their own life, and they will connect with the stories and experiences the ghosts share with Alice. It also pertains to the family show watchers so that parents could sit and watch it with their children and both demographics could relate to it.

This show concentrates on Alice's family: her mom and her community. At the dental office, lots of comedy will be inserted through the workplace shenanigans and eccentric co-worker personalities. More of the dramatics side of things will be showcased through the tense relationship between Alice and Diana, and the different mother/daughter arguments they get into. A lot of their tension has to do with their lack of trust in each other to express how they are truly feeling after experiencing their loss.

This show also touches on the awkwardness of growing up. Social media in the current digital era can cause teens to feel isolated in their experience of going through puberty. Now, there is such an

extreme amount of content that makes young adults feel like they must uphold a certain body type, style, or aesthetic to have worth. This show reminds this age group that the “awkward phase” is supposed to happen it helps us grow and mature as people. Having a community support, her and help guide her through this quite embarrassing and humbling time makes the audience reflect on their own puberty journey. It brings back those cringe worthy, laugh-out-loud memories that made us into the adults we are today.

There is also the reoccurring theme of not knowing what the hell you’re doing with your life, also known as being an adult. In a time where we are supposed to have a LinkedIn right out of the womb, we are expected to know exactly what we want to do and the correct path to get there as soon as possible. The reality is, there is no age where everyone has their life figured out. My own father, after having two children and turning 63 says that he still doesn’t know what he wants to do with his life. And that doesn’t get talked about enough. This show confronts the audience with the fact that no matter how old you are, you are still just as terrified and confused about life as you were at 13. And through the character of Alice’s father, it gives us an inside look of someone still trying to figure out their life after death. The show reflects on adulthood being advertised as a concrete life plan, while it’s just a bunch of taller and older children dressing in suits still playing pretend.

Concept:

Pulling Teeth focuses on 13-year-old medium, Alice Chiggins, and her relationship with her mother Diana. Alice must adjust to the new relationship between her mother Diana and herself while also communicating with her dead dad, Martin Chiggins. The show is a coming-of-age, dramedy with a supernatural flare. With each hour-long episode, Alice, and her dad, encounter a new spirit in their journey to cross over to the “other side”. Simultaneously, the show follows her mother, Diana’s, perspective on becoming a single parent, grieving the loss of her husband, and surviving the zany antics of her coworkers at the dental office.

This show takes place in small-town Dustin, IN. It’s close enough to Chicago for people to visit for the weekend, but it still carries the natural charm of nature and woodsy wildlife. Dustin is majority a middle-class town, and it houses lots of eclectic personalities. In each episode, different areas of the town are explored, but the main settings are the dental office, and the Chiggins Household. The downtown square is always populated with people, and everyone mingles casually with each other. Gossip zips around quickly in Dustin. With it being such a tight knit community, they deal with major hardships together, as a family. When Alice’s father dies, everyone in the town comes to the funeral, and takes on the community responsibility to be there for the family.

Just when she things couldn’t get much worse for her, Alice gets her first period. This awakens her medium abilities, as she realizes she’s now able to communicate with her dead dad’ ghost. At first, she just as overwhelmed with her abilities as she is with becoming a teenager, but over the course of the show she gains confidence in herself and her power. While these escapades occur, Diana, now a working single-mom, is forced to take on more hours at the dental office to keep things afloat for the two of them. Diana’s priority is to get the promotion as dental assistant, provide for Alice, and to keep her safe. Her biggest fear is being alone, and it drives her paranoia directed at Alice. It causes lots of tension between her and her daughter.

Alice is the only one in town who’s aware of her gift. As for the other ghosts, they don’t always understand why they’re stuck in limbo. Sometimes, a ghost has a specific purpose, like telling loved ones about a secret letter, or other times they must confront much broader issues like addressing past regrets or life choices. Her and Martin talk to the ghosts, figure out what the dilemma is preventing them from crossing over, and help them achieve their goal. They work as a team to give messages to the living from each ghost to help them complete their business and finally move on. Most of the ghosts aren’t recent deaths, but they all have ties to certain people in town. Some died ten years ago, and others died 100 years ago. Each spirit’s “business” has to with a core person, memory, or regret they still haven’t fully dealt with. Lots of the issues that these ghosts deal with resonates with Alice, and they force her to process the

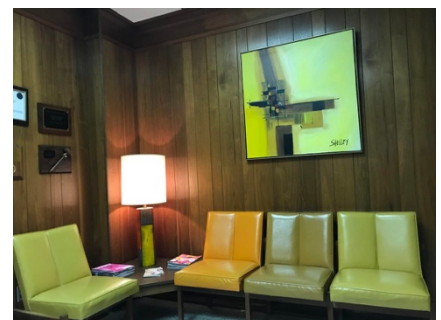
trauma and identity shock her dad's death left her with. The Dustin locals cannot see or hear the ghosts, so in order not to draw attention to herself or cause a scene, Alice takes the ghosts to the dental office to talk privately (specifically, the empty office space in the back). Martin relishes this opportunity to redeem his relationship with Alice, but he knows that it comes at a cost: the moral dilemma of allowing your family to move on without you but not wanting to let go of them yourself. Having a reason to spend more time with Alice keeps him motivated to stay in limbo as long as possible. While they keep helping more lost souls, he becomes aware that he's still there because of his own unfinished business, and he will have to cross over inevitably. Alice's main goal is to prevent her dad from passing on so that she doesn't have to address how his death makes her feel.

World/ Themes /Tone:



The show is set in the fictional small town of Dustin, IN in 2005. Imagine that a Hallmark movie had a one-night stand with Larry David, but the condom broke: First off, that'd be one screwed up looking kid. Secondly, that's Dustin. Dustin is the glue that upholds the eccentric community dynamic. With Alice constantly bopping around to help different spirits in each episode, she is always moving about the town and conversing with different types of people.

If there is a heart of the town, it would be the dental office. It is the only place that feels like time has completely stopped, and it stopped in the 1970s. The walls are faux wooden planks that contrast the vivid colors that decorate the space. Bright pops of yellow the waiting room accent the waiting room, and the vibrant rugs lay across the floor. This nostalgia allows patients to feel comfortable and are more open with the staff about their lives and problems. This allows the staff, and the audience to gain information about each character to fuel the "case-of-the-week" scenarios.



When patients are sitting in the waiting room, or just about to walk out the door, it creates the need for chit chat. Most of the time it's just the local yenta trying to set you up with her 45-year-old virgin son who still lives in her basement. But staff is more eccentric than the patients. While Diana is trying to keep herself from having a god damn mental breakdown, her co-workers always keep the office interesting, acting like they're straight out of the SNL skit on steroids. Despite her always complaining about how her co-workers screwed her over that day, she always talked about them as if they were her siblings. That family dynamic of the workplace, and the relationship between the dental staff and the community is key to how they come together to help Diana and Alice adjust to their new lifestyle. Even though everyone knows everyone in the town, Alice's abilities push the audience to meet characters that even the townspeople might not know personally like historical figures, distant generations, etc. seeing as most of the ghosts come from the past.



This world functions like our world does, but there are rules concerning the ghosts:

- Ghosts can't pick things up, touch things/people, and interfere with the living world physically. They can walk through walls to travel places.
- Alice can see and hear the ghosts, and vice versa; however, the rest of the townspeople cannot. This means that Alice must communicate with them discretely, or as subtle as possible, as not to draw attention to herself. If she were to draw attention, the residents would be extremely confused and alarmed. I mean seeing someone talk to themselves is always a strange sight, but I've taken the Red Line at one the morning. I've seen much weirder.
- Ghosts become ghosts because of unfinished business from their past life. It's like getting an "Incomplete" in a college, except this time daddy can't bribe the dean out of this one. Only when their specific business is satisfied, the ghost passes on to the "other side".
- Ghosts appear in the physical form that they were in when they created their "unfinished business"
 - If they fell in love with someone at age 16 and left them, but regretted it, then they will be 16 in ghost form
- "Passing on" is depicted as going through a special door. Whenever a spirit finishes the task, they need to, a bright red door appears somewhere in the location they are in (it is always the same door incorporated into the present space they are in). By going to the door voluntarily, and walking through it, they have then transitioned beyond the earthly plane. No one living knows what is on the other side because if we did, that would've saved us from fighting in, practically all of world wars wouldn't it?
- People can sometimes feel the energy of the ghosts around them, but most people do not notice it. If people do sense it in some way, it usually feels like a cold draft/cold spot of air.

With 9/11 occurring only 4 years prior, there is a massive grieving period still hitting the town, and it serves as a catalyst for people to be extremely emotional when someone in the town passes or enters dangerous situations. *Pulling Teeth* may feel familiar from that local perspective in which there's someone in the town that the audience can relate to, but it offers a dual perspective of seeing what it feels like to watch people move on, or refuse to move on, from the deceased point of view. Alice allows the audience to process how the ghosts feel watching their loved ones grieve from the other side while they grieve their own loss as well. Just as Alice starts her journey into young adulthood, Diana is still growing up in her own way alongside her. The show circles around the questions "Is there a universal way to grieve loss?", "Is there an age where you should have your life figured out?", "Can you ever *really* move

on once someone you love dies?”, “Is there a ‘right’ way to grieve?” It also tackles issues like adjusting to abrupt and extreme change, discovering who you are as a person (and whether or not you truly like yourself), the discomfort (growing pains) of being a teen, fear of being alone, and the struggles of letting go of the past. Additionally, the storyline that takes place at the dental office gives the audience a taste at how these interconnected relationships at the office also significantly impact a person forms their identity. The office dynamic between Diana and her co-workers gives an honest insight on how adults can still get in immature quarrels, competitions, and jealousies in the workplace. These office-based characters display how adults are more like taller teenagers: they’re awkward, hormonal, and can be a raging bitch sometimes. This portion of the show often deals with themes like “Can you love my family but deeply dislike them?”, and “Do you ever really ‘grow up’?”.

Tone (Language and Sexual Situations): Since smart phones don’t exist yet, everyone relies mainly on word-of-mouth to get their daily local news. They can be polite to each other on their good days and extremely snarky and on a war path the on their bad days. Much like siblings, the simplest things can start an argument between neighbors, or World War III. However, disagreements between the community are usually absurd circumstances that result in rowdy comedic circumstances. Although Alice is extremely intelligent for her age, she lacks the experience on lots of situations. Alice believes she’s always right, and her opinions are always correct...until she’s put in a situation where she’s out of her element. Her superiority complex usually ends up getting her into some sticky situations. Her dead father also adds heavily to the comedic banter in the show. Lots of their dialogue is a bunch of back-and-forth sarcasm and stubbornness. You think you’re watching siblings argue until you remember that it’s a father-daughter duo. On the flip side, the dynamic between Alice and Diana deals with more yelling, eye-rolling, and door slamming. The two different relationships give a balance to the comedic and dramatic elements of the show. In the more adult side of the show, Diana encounters opportunities to re-explore romance as a single woman once again. Getting back in in the dating game is just as easy to her as riding a bike: except the bike hasn’t been ridden in years, the wheels fall off, and it spontaneously combusts into flames. On second thought, that sounds like absolute hell.

Main Characters:

Alice Chiggins (13), white (blend of English and Polish decent): Before her dad passed away and she came into her now powers, Alice spent lots of time by herself playing pretend. Her imagination fueled her entertainment. She has always had a flare for the dramatic at home. Her parents always encouraged her to be social at school, but Alice was a naturally reserved and anxious person in public, so she never revealed the creativity she harnessed at home. Since she was a toddler, one of her tics was to aggressively bite her lower lip to the point where it would become raw whenever she felt nervous, scared, or upset. Although, when she was with people, she felt comfortable around, she a quick-witted spitfire. She uses her words as a weapon because she is physically not threatening at all. Her dad was her role model, and they shared the same sense of humor toward everything, so she always felt the most secure being vulnerable around him. Her mom and her had a tense relationship, as it was evident that they did not share many of the same preferences, and Alice was always vocal when her and her mom would get into a disagreement. Once her dad died, Alice completely shut her mother out.

Now, she never talks about her feelings, and keeps conversation to a minimum. At school, her anger toward the death of her father projects itself onto the students in her class, the townspeople who try to comfort her, and her mother. She feels suffocated by her mom’s constant worrying, and this evokes fits of unfiltered anger; yet after ever fight, she’s immediately sick with guilt. Because she speaks with the ferocity and sharpness of a knife, she knows exactly what to say to emotionally wound someone. She views this as a defense mechanism, but her self-centered anger is one of her major flaws that inhibits her from releasing her vulnerability. Dealing with her powers, in addition to managing all the twists and turns of puberty is extremely overwhelming to her. She’s desperately to find her new identity after losing her dad, combatting hormonal acne, and acting as the crossing guard for the town ghosts, but she refuses to

let anyone see her break. One of her secrets is that she majorly cares about how she looks. She knows that she doesn't resemble her mother when she was 13, and this self-awareness fuels her lack of confidence physically. But she'll be damned if she lets her mom know that. That's why she is always on the defensive. If anyone tries to get to know her or get close to her, she acts like an absolute jackass. She'll put on a front to seem standoffish, but she's too scared to lose anyone else that she cares about.

As Alice continues to help other spirits transition to the other side, with the help of her dad, she will realize that acknowledging that her life has changed inevitably is the only way to move forward. Meeting new spirits will reveal to her that she has not fully accepted her dad's death since he's still constantly with her, and that has prevented her from progressing in the grieving process. From the beginning, Alice has always aspired to be just like her dad, but she will come to learn that her dad isn't the perfect superhero she idolized as a child. This will also force her to see how alike she and her mom can be, and this revelation provides a more humanized perspective to the woman she always thought of as her adversary. This need to keep finding new spirits to help is internally motivated by her father and her need keep him in her life. Once they solve all the town ghost problems, her dad can cross over. Alice will be forced to make the decision to keep solving these cases or to let her dad finish his business and finally pass on. She will also have to choose between keeping her bond with her dad or sacrificing her pride to build her relationship with her mom.

Diana Chiggins (40), white (Polish descent): Growing up, Diana was always the most beautiful and poised girl in her grade. With chiseled cheekbones, a model-like figure, and glistening blue eyes, she was used to being adored. When Alice turns out to be a foil for the daughter she always envisioned, it catches her off guard. Diana was always envious of her husband's relationship with Alice. They seemed to mesh more instinctually, and Diana tried to force that bond between her and her daughter. She wanted a family more than anything in the world, but with her and Alice constantly butting heads, she struggled to feel like she was a good mother. She was raised by parents who didn't emotionally nurture her, and she modeled her own parenting after this style too. Instead of comforting Alice whenever she was feeling overly emotionally, she would resort to soothing her with gifts and toys, which became a habit of hers. Her and her husband both came from middle class families, and they raised Alice under the same socioeconomic status. This meant that they were well enough off to give Alice a comfortable lifestyle, but they still had to work long hours to afford all that came with that lifestyle. Diana wasn't raised religious, so she didn't grow up with a deep connection to God. After 9/11, Diana became severely paranoid that something horrible would happen to Alice or her husband. She became ragingly cautious about the world, constantly hovering over the two. She wasn't taught how to express her vulnerability as a child, so she resorted to extremes to control what she feared. Her feeble attempts to grasp for control dramatically backfired once her husband died. This need for control is one of her biggest flaws.

With the passing of her husband, Diana's paranoia sets in even worse. Instead of talking to Alice about how they are both feeling about their current situation, she determines that sheltering Alice as much as possible is the only way to keep her safe; predictably, this creates further tension between the two. When Alice starts venturing out more into the town to help these ghosts finish their earthly business, this sets Diana's nerves into overdrive. Her stress ages her, giving her worry lines more depth and her eyes a glassy coat of exhaustion. She still uses material things as a cop out to being authentic with her emotions, and this prevents her or Alice from genuinely moving on. Diana carries the same attitude as Alice when it comes to logic: it's either my way or the wrong way. So, when she pushes a hyper-feminine outlook onto the puberty journey, she is frustrated and confused as to why Alice cannot get in line with her point of view. Her goal in the show is to find an office that can pay her more. More than anything in the world, Diana wants to provide the world for Alice. But her co-workers are her family. She must choose whether to stay at her current office at the risk of missing her child grow up.

As Diana is forced to confront her emotions head on, she will realize how she has been inhibiting the healing process for her family. The arguments she will get into with Alice, along with some honest observations by her co-workers will drive Diana to emotionally mature. She will learn to be honest with herself and admit that she doesn't know what the hell she's doing, and that she doesn't need to pretend to

act put together all the time. Sometimes, these breakthroughs will come in moments of uncontrollable breakdowns (in which she becomes emotionally unhinged). By watching Alice take on her own identity, she will also discover new interests and passions she never allowed herself to explore, like improv and theatre. Throughout the series, Diana will also be tested by new budding relationships that put her in the position to consider romantic love again. She knows that Alice will be totally against any new boyfriends, but these scenarios will corner Diana into deciding if she is willing to give up everything for Alice's happiness at the expense of her own.

Martin Chiggins (41), white (English descent): Martin grew up with the gift of gab that ultimately won him the favor of Diana as a teen. He was never the most handsome man in the room, so he relied on his way with words to charm a room or score him a date with a pretty lady. He was incredibly witty, and he always had to have the last word. Although he carried many ego-centric tendencies, his biggest Achilles heel was Alice. Almost every decision he made concerned his own well-being above others, but when it came to Alice, he would move mountains to see her smile. He and his daughter were attached at the hip, always getting into mischief with each other. When he got laid off from his job at a bigtime advertising firm in downtown Chicago, the family became much more frugal with their one-income lifestyle. Still not ready to let go of all the luxuries that came with his previous job, he went on a spending rampage: buying all sorts of nonsense he neither needed nor could afford. This sent Diana and him into non-stop arguments about the family finances. He refused to take any acknowledgement or responsibility concerning the money problems, and he pinned the narrative on Diana not picking up her end of the slack, which he consciously knew was not true. He'd say anything to get the last word, being the prideful, arrogant man, he was. Never being the one to apologize, he chose to flee the scene and walk to the local (and only) bar in town. Getting immeasurably drunk, he thought that it'd be a good idea to walk along into the nearby woods. On his way out of the woods, in the pitch black of night, he stumbled into the road just as a car was passing through. He instantly collided with the car and plummeted to the ground. The car, having out-of-state plates zoomed away from the scene, leaving him dead.

The last thing Martin remembers is that he is standing over his coffin at the funeral, putting two-and-two together. He must reconcile with who he left behind and the consequences of his actions. Watching Alice hurt from the decision he made makes him believe that what he did to his family was incredibly self-centered. As he spends more time watching over Alice and Diana, he becomes riddled with guilt and remorse. For being the one to always make everything into a joke, this new journey is especially difficult for him. He still inserts his humor into every situation he can but being a dead man in the world of the living certainly shifts his perspective on his past life choices and it shifts his view on how every person's actions significantly impact the others around them. While taking on these new cases with Alice, he grows sentimental of the quality time he gets to spend with her because he knows that he cannot stick around forever. His goal is to delay himself from crossing over as long as he can.

Unfortunately, his newfound acknowledgement for taking responsibility for his actions will create a challenge for his goal. As he matures throughout his spirit lifespan, he realizes that he is solving his business, and this could make him pass on quicker than expected. Because he doesn't have any religious ties, he is terrified at what lies beyond the door on the other side, and he can't stand the idea of being nothing since he's spent his whole life being the center of attention. Martin will have to fight the battle between returning to his old selfish ways to elongate his time on earth and allowing his family to move so that he can move on as well.

Supporting Characters:

Debbie (38), Mexican American and White (German): Debbie and Diana were best friends during their school years, but Debbie also viewed her as a silent enemy. Debbie always thought that Diana had the perfect life with the perfect family, and this drove her wild. Growing up, her mother constantly compared Debbie to Diana, making Debbie feel insufficient. As a Mexican American, Debbie's mom was rigorously stereotyped scrutinized, and she knew that Debbie appearing "white passing" gave her more

opportunities without being hassled as persistently. That's why she gave her more of a WASP sounding name, and made her befriend the most popular, picture-perfect white girl in town. Their friendship was always an unspoken competition in her eyes, and her jealousy raged on throughout the rest of their friendship. As Diana was slim and dainty, and basically a posterchild for poise, Debbie's natural curves and vibrant personality always earned her a scolding. So, she did her best to play the part her mother wanted her to. While from one perspective this treatment was out of love, in Debbie's eyes she could never live up to the standards put in place for her. She resented Diana in the shadows, and it fueled her determination to outshine Diana whenever she could.

While Diana is dealing with losing her husband, Debbie is in the final stages of her divorce, and even with this tragedy she feels like Diana is somehow still one-upping her. She carries herself with a tall, elegant, artificial posture. Always trying to act effortlessly put together, she masks her raw emotions behind her mask, but her eyes are her most obvious tell. Hungry for validation, she loves when Alice complains to her about her mother. Diana's imperfections are fuel to Debbie's ego. Although she acts as a confidante to Alice, she gets an equal amount of emotional payoff in their interactions. Her goal is to get the position of assistant hygienist to finally have an advantage over Diana. If she doesn't get this promotion, she will never gain the superiority and validity she desperately craves by her peers, and Diana herself. As insecure as Debbie is about herself compared to Diana, that's the only friend she's ever had that accepted her unconditionally.

As she continues to gain the truth on Diana's life, she will come to realize it was never as perfect as she always expected. This will cause her to reflect on her past choices, and how she dedicated her own life to tearing down someone else's. As the series goes on, Debbie will have opportunities to find what she's talented at, without the persistent judgement looming over her. With these new revelations, she will change her pessimistic perspective about herself and find reasons to appreciate her differences and dismantle the intrusive thoughts her mother planted in her head long ago. She'll have to look in the mirror and confront her need for acceptance and how that's caused her to sabotage a real friendship between her and Diana.

Ciara (Kee-ra) (24), Irish: Ciara was born in Ireland and moved to the United States when she was 13 years old. Her parents immigrated to Chicago to live with some extended family while finding work opportunities. Ciara was always a boisterous child, singing and humming everywhere she went. Her wild scarlet curls always grabbed people's attention in any room, and her personality matched the loudness of her appearance. Caring a whimsical and almost fairy-like cadence, most people underestimate Ciara's intelligence; however, she was one of the top students in all her classes. Most of her peers teased her relentlessly about her voluminous scarlet ringlets and thick accent, so she tried her best to not draw additional attention to herself. Being a naturally social butterfly, Ciara hated acting like a wallflower in school, but she knew that the minute she opened her mouth the snickers and jokes would be thrown her way. When she branched out and moved to Dustin, IN, at first the town ostracized her for her unique look. Eventually, they got used to her and welcomed her as a part of the community.

She's the Luna Lovegood of Dustin, IN. Cleaning people's teeth and socializing with patients every day is a treat to her. She floats skips around the office like a wood nymph with airy steps, seemingly happy about Around the office, everyone respects her except her boss. Her goal in the show is to gain his respect by earning the spot as his assistant hygienist. This position allows her to aid in all the major dental procedures, but to Ciara it's more about being taken seriously in the office. Even though she appears giddy 24/7, she's secretly still massively affected by how other perceive her. She yearns to be seen as an equal, and her boss refuses to grant her that satisfaction. She follows her boss around like a lost puppy trying to find anything to earn his seal of approval. Diana and Ciara were not always close, but after Martin's death Ciara acts as a huge ally in Diana's life.

Ciara will realize her people-pleasing attitude will be her biggest weakness. She will have to choose between repressing her identity at the cost of gaining her boss's respect or embracing the quirks and characteristics that make her unique. The crazy tasks her boss will make her complete, like counting all the gloves in the storage closet to make sure there's not an odd number, give him further reason to

deny her from reaching her goal. She will have to grow up from the embarrassment and self-consciousness that remains with her from childhood to earn the most important person's respect: her own.

Dr. Ken Lemon (55), African American: Standing at around 5'6", Dr. Lemon expresses a massive Napoleon complex. Having to be the most dominant personality in the room intimidates many patients and his own co-workers, but he holds respect for those who don't immediately cower to his blunt attitude. Dr. Lemon met Diana when he first took over the dental practice from his late father. Diana just finished shadowing his office while in dental hygiene school, and she hit it off with him by striking up a conversation that somehow led to the topic of how Diana's mother used to babysit Judy when she was a child.

His only soft spot is his wife, Judy. She is the only person to challenge his drill sergeant demeanor, and he absolutely adores that about her. If anyone is allowed to poke fun at him, it is Judy. At the same time Martin dies, Dr. Lemon gets the news that Judy has terminal cancer. His only goal is to keep working so that he can pay for the most advanced doctors and treatments to change the status of Judy's cancer. If he doesn't achieve this goal, he knows there's only one other route, and that's not even an option to him. He acts as an anti-hero in the show, discouraging and berating his employees. Despite his cold, brittle exterior, she somehow finds a little warmth inside himself when he spends time with Alice. He admires her intellect and grit, so he finds time to take her under his wing and act as a mentor for her. Half of her flippant retorts are learned in his company.

Dr. Lemon will come to terms with his presence in the office and undergo a dramatic attitude check. He won't lose his ferocity, but he will see how being considerate and compassionate towards others can make a huge impact in their life and work ethic. Apathy is his largest weakness, but as the series continues, he will have to go through his own hardships that teach him how significant just a little empathy and sympathy can be.

Pilot Summary:

We open on Martin Chiggins, Alice's father's, funeral. Alice and her mother Diana sit quietly in the few first pew of the local church, while her co-workers Debbie, Ciara, and Dr. Lemon sit behind them trying to pay attention to the eulogy.

Suddenly, a sharp pain surfaces in Alice's abdomen, causing her to make a B-line for the bathroom. Everyone just assumes she's stricken with sadness about her father, so no one goes after her. Alice darts to a bathroom stall and fiercely slams the door behind her. Suspiciously, Alice looks down to see if her thoughts were correct. Then, she encounters the ghost of her dead dad in the bathroom. Meanwhile, Diana sits in the pew, looking as lifeless as her husband in the casket. Debbie and Ciara both slide into the bench next to her, to check in on her. The girls offer to bring Diana and Alice a meal after the service, but Diana politely declines. Back in the bathroom Alice becomes too overwhelmed with what she's experiencing so she dashes out of the bathroom, not ready to process it. Once the funeral ends, everyone heads to their cars, and Alice stays silent. She almost tells her mom about what happened, but she knew that no one would believe her. And so, they both drive back home in sheer silence.

After finishing dinner in continued silence, Alice hurries to her room, where Martin's ghost is already waiting for her. She refuses to believe this is actually happening and yells for Martin to get out of her room and out of her head, as she believes she's hallucinating the whole thing. Then, she peers out the window to see Mrs. Sanchez, her old babysitter, pacing back and forth outside which deeply concerns her. So, she decides to go check on her. Her mom fell asleep on the couch, giving Alice the perfect opportunity to sneak out.

After asking Mrs. Sanchez if she's alright, the old lady keeps repeating that there's no one to take care of her cat, Chester. Alice walks her back to her house and helps her in the already unlocked door. Mrs. Sanchez leads Alice to her bedroom when Alice lets out a piercing scream. There lies Mrs. Sanchez peacefully on her bed with Chester meowing at her bedside. Alice darts back out the front door, heading back home.

As Alice is at Mrs. Sanchez's, Diana jumps awake from her nap due to a loud commercial on the television. There's a large stack of bills she starts sifting through, and she sighs knowing that living a single-income life is going to be a challenge going forward. She mindlessly channel surfs when the doorbell rings. Standing on the front porch are Debbie and Ciara, casseroles, and wine in hand. They say that they know Diana said she wanted to be alone, but they couldn't help but stop by to check-in. Diana smiles and invites them in. While they all sip their wine, Debbie brings up the new dental assistant promotion Dr. Lemon brought up to her outside the church today. Debbie and Ciara both express their interest in the position, but Diana knows she depends on it, so stays silent and listens actively as the girls keep talking about the additional pay that comes along with it. She knows she needs to get that promotion.

Alice bursts through the door telling Diana that she needs to call the police because Mrs. Sanchez died. Thinking that Alice is trying to cause a scene, she sends Alice up to her room. Alice keeps telling her mom that this isn't a joke, and that she's really dead, but Diana's anger manifest from the exhaustion of the day causing her to scream at Alice to stop acting like a child. Alice, with tears streaming down her face, runs out the door again, and just keeps running.

She stops running and collapses out of exhaustion at a park about 10 minutes from her house. She's trying to process everything when Martin comes and sits on the swing next to her. They get into an argument which leads to Alice dismissing the idea that he's a ghost because then that means that he's actually dead. Whereas, if it were all in her head, she could pretend he was alive still without having to face reality. Martin tells Alice about the night he died, something Diana never mentioned to Alice, so she knew that this was really happening. They keep talking, trying to figure out how this is possible, and she realized that she only had this ability once her period started.

Diana, suddenly worried where Alice has been for the last hour, scours the neighborhood to find her. She becomes riddled with anxiety, stemming from the abrupt loss of her husband. She thinks to check at Mrs. Sanchez's house and goes inside to discover Alice was telling the truth. After calling the police, Diana stays at Mrs. Sanchez's, and this is when she sees Alice walking home from the park. She apologizes for not believing her earlier. Alice and her mom make-up, but the teen is preoccupied by Mrs. Sanchez's ghost pacing around the front yard as the police go inside. She posts Alice, begging her to take in Chester. Alice pleads with Diana that they take in the cat, and Diana gives in. Suddenly, the front door turns red, and Mrs. Sanchez is drawn to it. She opens the door and goes into the light on the other side, vanishing. Alice cannot see the door, but Martin can so he is explaining what he saw to Alice. They determine she's passing over.

The next morning, Alice wakes up giddy with excitement to talk to her dad again. When she can't find him, she thinks her dad crossed over. Her eyes well in tears, as she believes that her dad really is gone for good. She runs around the house looking for him, but there's no sign that he's there. She sobs, not ready to let go of him in this new form. Martin appears, relieving Alice, but she tells him that they cannot help other ghosts because if they can all cross over that means Martin can too. She tells Martin that she can't bear the thought of him not being there anymore. As Alice's mom heads out for work, she sits down to ask Alice how she knew that Mrs. Sanchez died last night. When Alice tells her mother the truth, Diana gets up thinking this is another one of Alice's rouses and leaves. Alice gets so frustrated that her mom never listens to her that they get into a huge argument right before Diana makes her exit.

Diana gets to work, remembering the promotion up for grabs, so she makes her way to Dr. Lemon's office to suck up to him, but Debbie and Ciara already beat her to it. Seeing that this will be a big competition, she decides she needs to plan her attack because she's going to get this bonus.

The earlier argument she had with Diana makes Alice think it's better if she keeps her dad a secret, not letting anyone know she can communicate with him. Then, Martin and Alice go back and forth on helping other ghosts. After a long back-and-forth conversation, Martin proposes that if they figure out when/how a ghost transitions to the beyond, then they can make sure that the process is delayed for Martin, since he wants to stay as much as Alice wants him to stay. Alice gives this decision a thought, adding that she's going to run into these ghosts already so she may as well help them. Alice's eyes go

wide when she spots what seems to be a 1920s flapper walking down the sidewalk outside her window. She points this out to Martin, giving him a look as to say, “Well, what are we waiting for?”

Episode Arcs:

The episodes will center on Alice meeting new ghosts and figuring out what it is that’s preventing them from passing on. As she helps these spirits transition, she learns more about what it means to be stuck on earth, how to get ghosts out of limbo, and how the process of passing on works. This keeps her motivated to delay her dad’s transition so that he can stick around as long as possible. While Alice jets around town on her own missions, Diana is focused on getting the big promotion at work to keep everything afloat at home.

“Miss Pearl”: Alice and Martin meet an ex-pageant queen ghost, Miss Pearl, who cannot pass over because she’s been haunted with guilt from cheating in her pageant in 1955. Diana enters the Miss Dustin Adult pageant but becomes obsessed with winning. Alice has to keep her mom from cheating to win the pageant, thereby righting Miss Pearl’s wrongdoing and letting her cross over. Diana confesses to Alice that she became obsessed with the pageant to keep her distracted from grieving, creating a bonding moment for her and her daughter.

“Science Lab”: When Ms. Hayfer’s science class enters lab work season, Alice is forced to find a partner. At the office, Diana and Debbie are stuck taking on the cleanings while Dr. Lemon and Ciara are away at dental conference in Chicago, and it goes less than smoothly as each woman has a different definition of “efficiency”. While in the science lab, Alice meets the ghost of a teen girl who ruined her partner’s science fair project years ago. Having to deal with the stresses of partner work, on top of righting the ghost’s past mistake, Alice finds out an having extra help might not be a bad thing.

“Matchmaker, matchmaker”: Alice walks home from school with her dad and finds an old woman pacing about disoriented in Old Man Tucker’s front yard. After finding out that this woman is trying to get ahold of her son to tell him she knows the code to the safe containing a fortune in the house, Alice needs to find a way to communicate this with Old Man Tucker without making him suspicious of her motives. While all that is going on, the local yenta is trying to set Diana up with all the eligible bachelor’s in town, and seeing all these suitors line up for her pisses off Debbie to the max.

“Surprise!”: Ciara is trying her best to impress Dr. Lemon, decides to throw him a surprise party for his birthday despite his orders to completely ignore his birthday. While out getting ice cream with her friends at her mother’s insistence to be more social, Alice’s senses alert her to the ghost of a boy seemingly hanging out with her group. He carries regret over selfishly ditching his own birthday party that his parents threw for him, and Alice realizes Dr. Lemon’s party might just provide a way for the boy to remedy the past

“Table For Two”: In the season finale, Diana’s got a hot date with Dr. Lemon’s younger brother, and this drives Martin ballistic with jealousy. Pre-occupied with the ghost of her next-door neighbor Anne Marie, she doesn’t have time to deal with the possibility of her mom entering a new relationship. Martin does everything in his power to try and sabotage the date, and Alice finds out that Anne Marie is trying to contact her grandson, who happens to be a waiter at the same restaurant where Diana’s date is. When Alice shows up unexpectedly at the restaurant, Diana thinks that she’s acting out because she’s not comfortable with her dating again, but that’s more of a projection of her own thoughts.