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Author: Alice Gerstenberg

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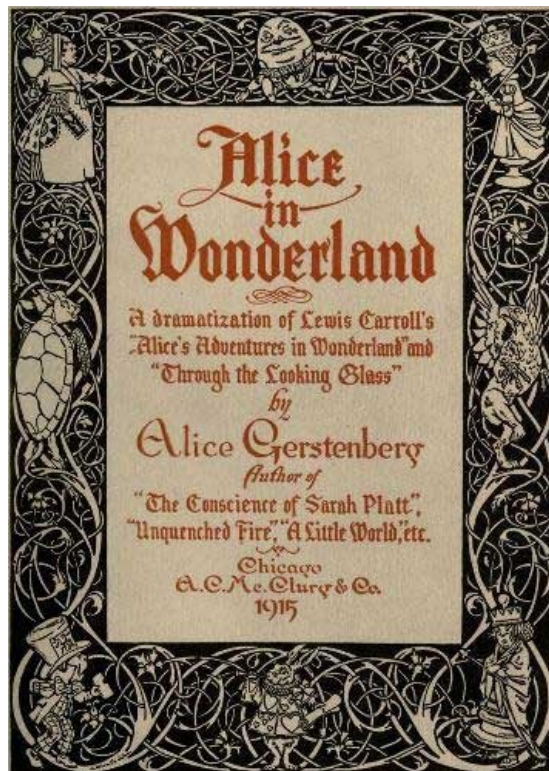
*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALICE IN WONDERLAND ***





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ALICE: You're Humpty Dumpty! Just like an egg.
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This dramatic rendering of *Alice in Wonderland*, by Alice Gerstenberg of Chicago, was produced by The Players Producing Company of Chicago (Aline Barnsdall and Arthur Bissell), at the Fine Arts Theater, Chicago, February 11, 1915. After a successful run it opened at the Booth Theater, New York, March 23, 1915.

The scenery and the costumes were designed by William Penhallow Henderson of Chicago.

The music was written by Eric De Lamarter of Chicago.

The advertising posters and cards were designed by Jerome Blum of Chicago.

The illustrations of the characters of the play in this book were drawn by J. Allen St. John from photographs by Victor Georg of Chicago.

W. H. Gilmore staged the play with the following cast:

LEWIS CARROLL	Frank Stirling
ALICE	Vivian Tobin
RED QUEEN	Florence LeClercq
WHITE QUEEN	Mary Servoss
WHITE RABBIT	Donald Gallaher
HUMPTY DUMPTY	Alfred Donohoe
GRYPHON	Fred W. Permain
MOCK TURTLE	Geoffrey Stein
MAD HATTER	Geoffrey Stein

MARCH HARE	Fred W. Permain
DORMOUSE	J. Gunnis Davis
FROG FOOTMAN	Walter Kingsford
DUCHESS	Kenyon Bishop
CHESHIRE CAT	Alfred Donohoe
KING OF HEARTS	Frederick Annerly
QUEEN OF HEARTS	Winifred Hanley
KNAVE OF HEARTS	Foxhall Daingerfield
CATERPILLAR	Walter Kingsford
TWO OF SPADES	Rule Pyott
FIVE OF SPADES	France Bendtsen
SEVEN OF SPADES	John A. Rice

Alice in Wonderland

THE SCENES

ACT I

Scene I—Alice's Home.
 Scene II—The Room in the Looking Glass.
 Scene III—The Hall with Doors.
 Scene IV—The Sea Shore.

ACT II

Scene—The March Hare's Garden.

ACT III

Scene I—The Garden of Flowers.
 Scene II—The Court of Hearts.
 Scene III—Alice's Home.

Miss Gerstenberg's manuscript called for costumes after the illustrations of John Tenniel, and scenery of the simple imaginative type, the "new art" in the theater.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Alice in Wonderland

[Pg 1]

ACT I

SCENE ONE

ALICE'S home. LEWIS CARROLL is discovered, playing chess. Golden-haired ALICE, in a little blue dress, a black kitten in her arms, stands watching him.

ALICE

That's a funny game, uncle. What did you do then?

CARROLL

A red pawn took a white pawn; this way. You see, Alice, the chessboard is divided into sixty-four squares, red and white, and the white army tries to win and the red army tries to win. It's like a battle!

ALICE

With soldiers?

CARROLL

Yes, here are the Kings and Queens they are fighting for. That's the Red Queen and here's the White Queen.

[Pg 2]

ALICE

How funny they look!

CARROLL

See the crowns on their heads, and look at their big feet.

ALICE

It's a foot apiece, that's what it is! Do they hump along like this?

CARROLL

Here! You're spoiling the game. I must keep them all in their right squares.

ALICE

I want to be a queen!

CARROLL

Here *you* are [*he points to a small white pawn*] here *you* are in your little stiff skirt!

ALICE

How do you do, Alice!

CARROLL

And now you are going to move here.

[Pg 3]

ALICE

Let me move myself.

CARROLL

When you have traveled all along the board this way and haven't been taken by the enemy you may be a queen.

ALICE

Why do people always play with kings and queens? Mother has them in her playing cards too. Look!

[ALICE *goes to the mantel and takes a pack of playing cards from the ledge.*]

Here's the King of Hearts and here's his wife; she's the Queen of Hearts—isn't she cross-looking? wants to bite one's head off.

[CARROLL *moves a pawn.*]

You're playing against yourself, aren't you?

CARROLL

That's one way of keeping in practice, Alice; I have friends in the university who want to beat me.

ALICE

But if you play against yourself I should think you'd want to cheat!

CARROLL

Does a nice little girl like you cheat when she plays against herself?

[Pg 4]

ALICE

Oh! I *never* do! I'd scold myself hard. I always pretend I'm *two* people too. It's lots of fun, isn't it? Sometimes when I'm all alone I walk up to the looking glass and talk to the other Alice. She's so silly, that Alice; she can't do anything by herself. She just mocks me all the time. When I laugh, she laughs, when I point my finger at her, she points her finger at me, and when I stick my tongue out at her she sticks her tongue out at me! Kitty has a twin too, haven't you darling?

[ALICE goes to the mirror to show Kitty her twin.]

CARROLL

I'll have to write a book some day about Alice—Alice in wonderland, "Child of the pure unclouded brow and dreaming eyes of wonder!" or, Alice through the looking glass!

ALICE

Don't you wish sometimes you could go into looking-glass house? See!

[ALICE stands on an armchair and looks into the mirror.]

There's the room you can see through the glass; it's just the same as our living-room here, only the things go the other way. I can see all of it—all but the bit just behind the fireplace. Oh! I do wish I could see that bit! I want so much to know if they've a fire there. You never *can* tell, you know, unless our fire smokes. Then smoke comes up in that room too—but that may be just to make it look as if they had a fire—just to pretend they had. The books are something like our books, only the words go the wrong way. Won't there ever be any way of our getting through, uncle?

[Pg 5]

CARROLL

Do you think Kitty would find looking-glass milk digestible?

ALICE

It doesn't sound awful good, does it; but I might leave her at home. She's been into an awful lot of mischief today. She found sister's knitting and chased the ball all over the garden where sister was playing croquet with the neighbors. And I ran and ran after the naughty little thing until I was all out of breath and so tired! I am tired.

[She yawns and makes herself comfortable in the armchair.]

CARROLL

[Replaces the playing cards on the mantel and consults his watch.]

Take a nap. Yes, you have time before tea.

ALICE

[Half asleep.]

We're going to have mock turtle soup for supper! I heard mamma tell the cook not to pepper it too much.

CARROLL

What a funny little rabbit it is, nibbling all the time!

[*He leans gently over the back of her chair, and seeing that she is going to sleep puts out the lamp light and leaves the room. A red glow from the fireplace illumines ALICE.*]

[Pg 6]

[*Dream music. A bluish light reveals the RED CHESS QUEEN and the WHITE CHESS QUEEN in the mirror.*]

RED QUEEN

[*Points to ALICE and says in a mysterious voice.*]

There she is, let's call her over.

WHITE QUEEN

Do you think she'll come?

RED QUEEN

I'll call softly, Alice!

WHITE QUEEN

Hist, Alice.

RED QUEEN

Alice!

WHITE QUEEN

Hush—if she wakes and catches us—

BOTH QUEENS

Alice, come through into looking-glass house!

[*Their hands beckon her.*]

ALICE

[*Rises, and talks sleepily. The Queens disappear. ALICE climbs from the arm of the chair to the back of another and so on up to the mantel ledge, where she picks her way daintily between the vases.*]

I—don't—know—how—I—can—get—through. I've tried—before—but the glass was hard—and I was afraid of cutting—my fingers—

[*She feels the glass and is amazed to find it like gauze.*]

Why, it's soft like gauze; it's turning into a sort of mist; why, it's easy to get through! *Why—why—I'm going through!*

[*She disappears.*]

[Pg 7]

SCENE TWO

[*Is Scene One, reversed. The portieres are black and red squares like a chessboard. A soft radiance follows the characters mysteriously. As the curtain rises ALICE comes through the looking glass; steps down, looks about in wonderment and goes to see if there is a "fire." The RED QUEEN rises out of the grate and faces her haughtily.*]

ALICE

Why, you're the Red Queen!

RED QUEEN

Of course I am! Where do you come from? And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers!

ALICE

[Pg 8]

I only wanted to see what the looking glass was like. Perhaps I've lost my way.

RED QUEEN

I don't know what you mean by your way; all the ways about here belong to *me*. Curtsey while you're thinking what to say. It saves time.

ALICE

I'll try it when I go home; the next time I'm a little late for dinner.

RED QUEEN

It's time for you to answer now; open your mouth a *little* wider when you speak, and always say, "Your Majesty." I suppose you don't want to lose your name?

ALICE

No, indeed.

RED QUEEN

And yet I don't know, only think how convenient it would be if you could manage to go home without it! For instance, if the governess wanted to call you to your lessons, she would call out "come here," and there she would have to leave off, because there wouldn't be any name for her to call, and of course you wouldn't have to go, you know.

[Pg 9]

ALICE

That would never do, I'm sure; the governess would never think of excusing me from lessons for that. If she couldn't remember my name, she'd call me "Miss," as the servants do.

RED QUEEN

Well, if she said "Miss," and didn't say anything more, of course you'd miss your lessons. I dare say you can't even read this book.

ALICE

It's all in some language I don't know. Why, it's a looking-glass book, of course! And if I hold it up to a glass, the words will all go the right way again.

JABBERWOCKY
'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

It seems very pretty, but it's *rather* hard to understand; somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't exactly know what they are.

RED QUEEN

I daresay you don't know your geography either. Look at the map!

[*She takes a right angle course to the portieres and points to them with her sceptre.*]

[Pg 10]

ALICE

It's marked out just like a big chessboard. I wouldn't mind being a pawn, though of course I should like to be a Red Queen best.

RED QUEEN

That's easily managed. When you get to the eighth square you'll be a Queen. It's a huge game of chess that's being played—all over the world. Come on, we've got to run. Faster, don't try to talk.

ALICE

I can't.

RED QUEEN

Faster, faster.

ALICE

Are we nearly there?

RED QUEEN

Nearly there! Why, we passed it ten minutes ago. Faster. You may rest a little now.

[Pg 11]

ALICE

Why, I do believe we're in the same place. Everything's just as it was.



RED QUEEN

Of course it is, what would you have it?

[Pg 12]

ALICE

Well, in our country you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing.

RED QUEEN

A slow sort of country. Now *here* you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that.

ALICE

I'd rather not try, please! I'm quite content to stay here—only I *am* so hot and thirsty.

RED QUEEN

I know what you'd like.

[*She takes a little box out of her pocket.*]

Have a biscuit?

[*ALICE, not liking to refuse, curtsseys as she takes the biscuit and chokes.*]

RED QUEEN

While you're refreshing yourself, I'll just take the measurements.

[*She takes a ribbon out of her pocket and measures the map with it.*]

At the end of two yards I shall give you your directions—have another biscuit?

[Pg 13]

ALICE

No thank you, one's *quite* enough.

RED QUEEN

Thirst quenched, I hope? At the end of three yards I shall repeat them—for fear of your forgetting them. At the end of *four*, I shall say good-bye. And at the end of five, I shall go! That Square belongs to Humpty Dumpty and that Square to the Gryphon and Mock Turtle and that Square to the Queen of Hearts. But you make no remark?

ALICE

I—I didn't know I had to make one—just then.

RED QUEEN

You *should* have said, "It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this," however, we'll suppose it said. Four! Good-bye! Five!

[RED QUEEN *vanishes in a gust of wind behind the portieres. Rabbit music. WHITE RABBIT comes out of the fireplace and walks about the room hurriedly. He wears a checked coat, carries white kid gloves in one hand, a fan in the other and takes out his watch to look at it anxiously.*]

WHITE RABBIT

Oh the Duchess! the Duchess! Oh! won't she be savage if I've kept her waiting!

[Pg 14]

ALICE

I've never seen a rabbit with a waistcoat and a watch! And a waistcoat pocket! If you please, sir—

WHITE RABBIT

Oh!

[*He drops fan and gloves in fright and dashes out by way of the portieres in a gust of wind. ALICE picks up the fan and playfully puts on the gloves. The portieres flap in the breeze and a shawl flies in.*]

ALICE

[*Catches the shawl and looks about for the owner; then meets the WHITE QUEEN.*]

I'm very glad I happened to be in the way.

WHITE QUEEN

[*Runs in wildly, both arms stretched out wide as if she were flying, and cries in a helpless frightened way.*]

Bread-and-butter, bread-and-butter.

ALICE

Am I addressing the White Queen?

WHITE QUEEN

Well, yes, if you call that a-dressing. It isn't my notion of the thing, at all.

[Pg 15]

ALICE

If your Majesty will only tell me the right way to begin, I'll do it as well as I can.

WHITE QUEEN

But I don't want it done at all. I've been a-dressing myself for the last two hours.

ALICE

Every single thing's crooked, and you're all over pins; may I put your shawl straight for you?

WHITE QUEEN

I don't know what's the matter with it! It's out of temper. I've pinned it here, and I've pinned it there, but there's no pleasing it.

ALICE

It *can't* go straight, you know, if you pin it all on one side, and dear me, what a state your hair is in!

WHITE QUEEN

The brush has got entangled in it! And I lost the comb yesterday.

ALICE

[*Takes out the brush and arranges the QUEEN'S hair.*]

You look better now! But really you should have a lady's maid!

[Pg 16]

WHITE QUEEN

I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure. Two pence a week and jam every other day.

ALICE

[*Who cannot help laughing.*]

I don't want you to hire me—and I don't care for jam.

WHITE QUEEN

It's very good jam.

ALICE

Well, I don't want any today, at any rate.

WHITE QUEEN

You couldn't have it if you *did* want it. The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday—but never jam today.

ALICE

It must come sometimes to "jam today."

WHITE QUEEN

No, it can't, it's jam every *other* day; today isn't any *other* day, you know.

ALICE

I don't understand you, it's dreadfully confusing!

[Pg 17]

WHITE QUEEN

That's the effect of living backwards, it always makes one a little giddy at first—

ALICE

Living backwards! I never heard of such a thing!

WHITE QUEEN

But there's one great advantage in it—that one's memory works both ways.

ALICE

I'm sure *mine* only works one way. I can't remember things before they happen.

WHITE QUEEN

It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards.

ALICE

What sort of things do you remember best?

WHITE QUEEN

Oh, things that happened the week after next. For instance now:

[*She sticks a large piece of plaster on her finger.*]

There's the King's messenger—he's in prison being punished; and the trial doesn't even begin till next Wednesday; and of course the crime comes last of all.

[Pg 18]

ALICE

Suppose he never commits the crime?

WHITE QUEEN

[*Binding the plaster with ribbon.*]

That would be all the better, wouldn't it?

ALICE

Of course it would be all the better, but it wouldn't be all the better his being punished.

WHITE QUEEN

You're wrong *there*, at any rate; were *you* ever punished?

ALICE

Only for faults.

WHITE QUEEN

And you were all the better for it, I know!

ALICE

Yes, but then I *had* done the things I was punished for; that makes all the difference.

WHITE QUEEN

But if you hadn't done them that would have been better still; better and better and better!

[Pg 19]

ALICE

There's a mistake somewhere—

WHITE QUEEN

[*Screams like an engine whistle, and shakes her hand.*]

Oh, Oh, Oh! My finger's bleeding. Oh, Oh, Oh!

ALICE

What *is* the matter? Have you pricked your finger?

WHITE QUEEN

I haven't pricked it yet—but I soon shall—Oh, Oh, Oh!

ALICE

When do you expect to do it?

WHITE QUEEN

When I fasten my shawl again; the brooch will come undone directly. Oh, Oh!

[Brooch flies open and she clutches it wildly.]

ALICE

Take care! you're holding it all crooked!

WHITE QUEEN

[Pricks her finger and smiles.]

That accounts for the bleeding, you see; now you understand the way things happen here.

[Pg 20]

ALICE

But why don't you scream now?



WHITE QUEEN

Why, I've done all the screaming already. What would be the good of having it all over again? Oh! it's time to run if you want to stay in the same place! Come on!

[Pg 21]

ALICE

No, no! Not so fast! I'm getting dizzy!!

WHITE QUEEN

Faster, faster!

ALICE

Everything's black before my eyes!

[There is music, and the sound of rushing wind, and in the darkness the WHITE QUEEN cries: "Faster, faster"; ALICE gasps: "I can't—please stop"; and the QUEEN replies: "Then you can't stay in the same place. I'll have to drop you behind. Faster—faster, good-bye."]

SCENE THREE

When the curtain rises one sees nothing but odd black lanterns with orange lights, hanging, presumably, from the sky. The scene lights up slowly revealing ALICE seated on two large cushions. She has been "dropped behind" by the WHITE QUEEN and is dazed to find herself in a strange hall with many peculiar doors and knobs too high to reach.

ALICE

Oh! my head! Where am I? Oh dear, Oh dear!

[She staggers up and to her amazement finds herself smaller than the table.]

I've never been smaller than any table before! I've always been able to reach the knobs! What a curious feeling. Oh! I'm shrinking. It's the fan—the gloves!

[Pg 22]

[She throws them away, feels her head and measures herself against table and doors.]

Oh! saved in time! But I never—never—

WHITE RABBIT

Oh! my fan and gloves! Where *are* my—

ALICE

Oh! Mr. Rabbit—please help me out—I want to go home—I want to go home—

WHITE RABBIT

Oh! the Duchess! Oh! my fur and whiskers! She'll get me executed, as sure as ferrets are ferrets! Oh! *you* have them!

ALICE

I'm sorry—you dropped them, you know—

WHITE RABBIT

[Picks up fan and gloves and patters off.]

She'll chop off your head!

ALICE

If you please sir—where am I?—won't you please—tell me how to get out—I want to get out—

[Pg 23]

WHITE RABBIT

[Looking at his watch.]

Oh! my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting.

[A trap door gives way and RABBIT disappears. ALICE dashes after only in time to have the trap door bang in her face.]

ALICE

[Amazed.]

It's a rabbit-hole—I'm small enough to fit it too! If I shrink any more it might end in my going out altogether like a candle. I wonder what I would be like then! What does the flame of a candle look like after the candle is blown out? I've never seen such a thing!

HUMPTY DUMPTY

[*Sits on the wall.*]

Don't stand chattering to yourself like that, but tell me your name and your business.

ALICE

My *name* is Alice, but—

HUMPTY DUMPTY

It's a stupid name enough, what does it mean?

ALICE

Must a name mean something?

[Pg 24]

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Of course it must; *my* name means the shape I am—and a good, handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.

ALICE

You're Humpty Dumpty! Just like an egg.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

It's *very* provoking, to be called an egg—*very*.

ALICE

I said you *looked* like an egg, Sir, and some eggs are very pretty, you know.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Some people have no more sense than a baby.

ALICE

Why do you sit here all alone?

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Why, because there's nobody with me. Did you think I didn't know the answer to *that*? Ask another.

ALICE

Don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground? That wall's so very narrow.

[Pg 25]

HUMPTY DUMPTY

What tremendously easy riddles you ask! Of course I don't think so. Take a good look at me! I'm one that has spoken to a king, I am; to show you I'm not proud, you may shake hands with me!

[*He leans forward to offer ALICE his hand but she is too small to reach it.*]

However, this conversation is going on a little too fast; let's go back to the last remark but one.

ALICE

I'm afraid I can't remember it.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

In that case we start fresh, and it's my turn to choose a subject.

ALICE

You talk about it just as if it were a game.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?

ALICE

Seven years and six months.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Wrong! You never said a word about it. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said, "Leave off at seven—but—"

[Pg 26]

ALICE

I never ask advice about growing.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Too proud?

ALICE

What a beautiful belt you've got on. At least, a beautiful cravat, I should have said—no, a belt, I mean—I beg your pardon. If only I knew which was neck and which was waist.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

It is a—*most—provoking*—thing, when a person doesn't know a cravat from a belt.

ALICE

I know it's very ignorant of me.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

It's a cravat, child, and a beautiful one, as you say. There's glory for you.

ALICE

I don't know what you mean by "glory."

HUMPTY DUMPTY

When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.

[Pg 27]

ALICE

The question is, whether you *can* make words mean different things.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

The question is, which is to be master—that's all. Impenetrability! That's what I say!

ALICE

Would you tell me, please, what that means?

HUMPTY DUMPTY

I meant by "impenetrability" that we've had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life.

ALICE

That's a great deal to make one word mean.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

When I make a word do a lot of work like that I always pay it extra.

ALICE

Oh!

[Pg 28]

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Ah, you should see 'em come round me of a Saturday night, for to get their wages, you know. That's all—Good-bye.

ALICE

Good-bye till we meet again.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

I shouldn't know you again, if we *did* meet, you're so exactly like other people.

ALICE

The face is what one goes by, generally.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

That's just what I complain of. Your face is the same as everybody has—the two eyes—so—nose in the middle, mouth under. It's always the same. Now if you had the two eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance—or the mouth at the top—that would be *some* help.

ALICE

It wouldn't look nice.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Wait till you've tried! Good-bye.

[He disappears as he came.]

[Pg 29]

ALICE

Oh! I forgot to ask him how to—

[She tries to open the doors. They are all locked; she begins to weep. She walks weeping to a high glass table and sits down on its lower ledge. She sits on a big golden key and picks it up in surprise. She tries it on all the doors but it does not fit. She weeps and weeps—and Wonderland grows dark to her in her despair. In the darkness she cries, "Oh! I'm slipping! Oh, Oh! it's a lake; Oh! my tears! I'm floating!" A mysterious light shows a "Drink me" sign around a bottle on the top of the table. ALICE floats up to it panting, and holding on to the edge of the table takes up the bottle.]

ALICE

It isn't marked poison.

[She sips at it.]

This is good! Tastes like cherry tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy and hot buttered toast—all together. Oh! Oh! I'm letting out like a telescope.

[A mysterious light shows her lengthening out.]

[Music.]

But the lake is rising too. Oh! Oh! it's deep! I'm drowning. Help, help, I'm drowning, I'm drowning in my tears!

GYPHON

Hjckrrh. Hjckrrh!

[The GYPHON, a huge green creature with big glittering wings, appears where HUMPTY DUMPTY

SCENE FOUR

[Pg 30]

Is symbolic of a wet and rocky shore in a weird green light. The MOCK TURTLE is weeping dismally.

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh. Hjckrrh. Hjckrrh.

MOCK TURTLE

[Answers with his weeping.]

GRYPHON

[Drags ALICE in.]

Drop your tears into the sea with his.

ALICE

He sobs as if he had a bone in his throat. He sighs as if his heart would break. What is his sorrow?

MOCK TURTLE

Oh, Gryphon, it's terrible!

GRYPHON

It's all his fancy that. Mock Turtle hasn't got no sorrow. This here young lady, she wants for to know your history, she do.

[Pg 31]

MOCK TURTLE

I'll tell it her. Sit down both of you, and don't speak a word till I've finished.

ALICE

I don't see how you can *ever* finish, if you don't begin.

MOCK TURTLE

Once, I was a real Turtle.

[A long silence is broken only by the exclamations, "Hjckrrh," of the GRYPHON and the heavy sobbing of the MOCK TURTLE.]

MOCK TURTLE

When we were little, we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle—we used to call him tortoise—

ALICE

Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?

MOCK TURTLE

We called him Tortoise because he taught us; really you are very dull.

GRYPHON

You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question. Drive on, old fellow! Don't be all day about it!

[Pg 32]

MOCK TURTLE

Yes, we went to school in the sea, tho' you mayn't believe it—

ALICE

I never said I didn't.

MOCK TURTLE

You did.

GRYPHON

Hold your tongue!

MOCK TURTLE

We had the best of educations—in fact, we went to school every day.

ALICE

I've been to a day school too; you needn't be so proud as all that.

MOCK TURTLE

With extras?

ALICE

Yes, we learned French and music.

MOCK TURTLE

And washing?

ALICE

Certainly not!

[Pg 33]



MOCK TURTLE

Ah! Then yours wasn't a really good school. Now at *ours* they had at the end of the bill, French, music, *and washing*—extra.

ALICE

You couldn't have wanted it much; living at the bottom of the sea.

MOCK TURTLE

I couldn't afford to learn it, I only took the regular course.

ALICE

What was that?

MOCK TURTLE

Reeling and writhing, of course, to begin with, and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.

ALICE

I never heard of Uglification. What is it?

GRYPHON

Never heard of uglifying! You know what to beautify is, I suppose?

ALICE

Yes, it means—to—make—anything—prettier.

GRYPHON

Well then, if you don't know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton.

[Pg 35]

ALICE

What else had you to learn?

MOCK TURTLE

Well, there was Mystery; Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography, then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger eel, that used to come once a week; what *he* taught us was Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.

ALICE

What was *that* like?

MOCK TURTLE

Well, I can't show it you, myself. I'm too stiff. And the Gryphon never learned it.

GRYPHON

Hadn't time; I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, *he* was.

MOCK TURTLE

I never went to him; he taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say.

GRYPHON

So he did, so he did.

[Pg 36]

ALICE

And how many hours a day did you do lessons?

MOCK TURTLE

Ten hours the first day, nine the next, and so on.

ALICE

What a curious plan!

GRYPHON

That's the reason they're called lessons, because they lessen from day to day.

ALICE

Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?

MOCK TURTLE

Of course it was.

ALICE

And how did you manage on the twelfth?

GRYPHON

That's enough about lessons, tell her something about the games now.

[MOCK TURTLE *sighs deeply, draws back of one flapper across his eyes. He looks at ALICE and tries to speak but sobs choke his voice.*]

[Pg 37]

GRYPHON

[*Punching him in the back.*]

Same as if he had a bone in his throat.

MOCK TURTLE

[*With tears running down his cheeks.*]

You may not have lived much under the sea—

ALICE

I haven't.

MOCK TURTLE

And perhaps you were never even introduced to a lobster.

ALICE

I once tasted—no, never!

MOCK TURTLE

So you can have no idea what a delightful thing a Lobster Quadrille is.

ALICE

No, indeed. What sort of a dance is it?

GRYPHON

Why, you first form into a line along the seashore.

[Pg 38]

MOCK TURTLE

Two lines; seals, turtles, salmon, and so on; then, when you've cleared all the jellyfish out of the way—

GRYPHON

That generally takes some time.

MOCK TURTLE

You advance twice—

GRYPHON

Each with a lobster as a partner.

MOCK TURTLE

Of course, advance twice, set to partners.

GRYPHON

Change lobsters, and retire in same order.

MOCK TURTLE

Then you know, you throw the—

GRYPHON

The lobsters!

MOCK TURTLE

As far out to sea as you can—

[Pg 39]

GRYPHON

Swim after them!

MOCK TURTLE

Turn a somersault in the sea.

GRYPHON

Change lobsters again!

MOCK TURTLE

Back to land again, and—that's all the first figure.

ALICE

It must be a very pretty dance.

MOCK TURTLE

Would you like to see a little of it?

ALICE

Very much indeed.

MOCK TURTLE

Come, let's try the first figure. We can do it without lobsters, you know; which shall sing?

GRYPHON

Oh, *you* sing, I've forgotten the words.

[*Creatures solemnly dance round and round ALICE, treading on her toes, waving fore-paws to mark time while MOCK TURTLE sings.*]

[Pg 40]

First Verse

"Will you walk a little faster!" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!

They are waiting on the shingle—will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

Second Verse

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance—
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

[*The creatures dance against ALICE, pushing her back and forth between them. She protests and finally escapes; they bump against each other.*]

[Pg 41]

ALICE

Thank you; it's a very interesting dance to watch, and I do so like that curious song about the whiting.

MOCK TURTLE

Oh, as to the whiting, they—you've seen them, of course?

ALICE

Yes, I've often seen them at din—

[*Checks herself hastily.*]

MOCK TURTLE

I don't know where Din may be, but if you've seen them so often, of course you know what they're like.

ALICE

I believe so, they have their tails in their mouths—and they're all over crumbs.

MOCK TURTLE

You're wrong about the crumbs, crumbs would all wash off in the sea. But they *have* their tails in their mouths; and the reason is—

[*MOCK TURTLE yawns and shuts his eyes.*]

[Pg 42]

Tell her about the reason and all that.

GRYPHON

The reason is, that they *would* go with the lobsters to the dance. So they got thrown out to sea. So they had to fall a long way. So they got their tails fast in their mouths. So they couldn't get them out again. That's all.

ALICE

Thank you, it's very interesting. I never knew so much about a whiting before.

GRYPHON

I can tell you more than that, if you like. Do you know why it's called a whiting?

ALICE

I never thought about it. Why?

GRYPHON

It does the boots and shoes.

ALICE

Does the boots and shoes!

GRYPHON

Why, what are *your* shoes done with? I mean, what makes them so shiny?

[Pg 43]

ALICE

They're done with blacking, I believe.

GRYPHON

Boots and shoes under the sea, are done with whiting. Now you know.

ALICE

And what are they made of?

GRYPHON

Soles and eels, of course; any shrimp could have told you that.

ALICE

If I'd been the whiting, I'd have said to the porpoise, "Keep back, please; we don't want *you* with us."

MOCK TURTLE

They were obliged to have him with them, no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise.

ALICE

Wouldn't it really?

MOCK TURTLE

Of course not; why if a fish came to me and told me he was going a journey, I should say, "With what porpoise?"

[Pg 44]

ALICE

Don't you mean purpose?

MOCK TURTLE

I mean what I say.



GRYPHON

Shall we try another figure of the Lobster Quadrille? Or would you like the Mock Turtle to sing you a song?

[Pg 45]

ALICE

Oh, a song please, if the Mock Turtle would be so kind.

GRYPHON

Um! No accounting for tastes! Sing her "Turtle Soup," will you, old fellow?

MOCK TURTLE

[Sighs deeply and sometimes choked with sobs, sings.]

"Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,
Waiting in a hot tureen!
Who for such dainties would not stoop?
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Beau—ootiful Soo—op,
Beau—ootiful Soo—oop,
Soo—oop of the e-e-evening,
Beautiful, beautiful Soup."

WHITE RABBIT

[Enters, stretching out a red and white checked sash with which he separates ALICE from the creatures.]

Check!

MOCK TURTLE

They won't let her stay in our square.

[Pg 46]

WHITE RABBIT

The Queen is coming this way.

GRYPHON

She'll chop our heads off. Come on, come on, let's fly!

[The MOCK TURTLE and GRYPHON *grab* ALICE and fly into the air.]

CURTAIN

[The Curtain rises to reveal small silhouettes of the GRYPHON, MOCK TURTLE, and ALICE in an orange-colored moon far away in the sky. Down below the WHITE RABBIT is shouting to them, "You'll be safe in the March Hare's garden."]

CURTAIN

ACT II

[Pg 47]

SCENE

The March Hare's garden, showing part of the Duchess' house. On a small platform there is a tea table, set with many cups, continuing into wings to give impression of limitless length. THE MARCH HARE, HATTER, and DORMOUSE are crowded at one end. ALICE sits on the ground where she has been dropped from the sky. Finding herself not bruised she rises and approaches the table.

MARCH HARE and HATTER

No room! No room!

ALICE

There's plenty of room!

[*She sits in a large armchair at one end of the table.*]

I don't know who you are.

MARCH HARE

I am the March Hare, that's the Hatter, and this is the Dormouse. Have some wine?

ALICE

I don't see any wine.

[Pg 48]

MARCH HARE

There isn't any.

ALICE

Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it.

MARCH HARE

It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE

I didn't know it was *your* table; it's laid for a great many more than three.

HATTER

Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE

You should learn not to make personal remarks; it's very rude.

HATTER

Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

ALICE

Come, we shall have some fun now! I'm glad you've begun asking riddles—I believe I can guess that.

MARCH HARE

So you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?



[Larger Image](#)

HATTER: Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE

Exactly so.

[Pg 49]

MARCH HARE

Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE

I do; at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know.

HATTER

Not the same thing a bit! Why, you might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as, "I eat what I see!"

MARCH HARE

You might just as well say that "I like what I get," is the same thing as "I get what I like."

DORMOUSE

You might just as well say that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe."

HATTER

It *is* the same thing with you.

[Takes out his watch, looks at it uneasily, shakes it, holds it to his ear.]

What day of the month is it?

[Pg 50]

ALICE

The fourth.

HATTER

Two days wrong. I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!

MARCH HARE

It was the *best* butter.

HATTER

Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well; you shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife—

MARCH HARE

[Takes the watch, looks at it gloomily, dips it into his cup of tea and looks at it again but doesn't know what else to say.]

It was the *best* butter, you know.

ALICE

What a funny watch! It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is.

HATTER

Why should it? Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?

[Pg 51]

ALICE

Of course not, but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together.

HATTER

Which is just the case with *mine*.

ALICE

I don't quite understand you. What you said had no sort of meaning in it and yet it was certainly English.

HATTER

[Pouring some hot tea on the DORMOUSE's nose.]

The Dormouse is asleep again.

DORMOUSE

Of course, of course, just what I was going to remark myself.

HATTER

Have you guessed the riddle yet?

ALICE

No, I give it up, what's the answer?

HATTER

I haven't the slightest idea.

[Pg 52]

MARCH HARE

Nor I.

ALICE

I think you might do something better with the time, than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.

HATTER

If you knew Time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*.

ALICE

I don't know what you mean.

HATTER

Of course you don't. I dare say you never even spoke to Time.

ALICE

Perhaps not, but I know I have to beat time when I learn music.

HATTER

Ah, that accounts for it. He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons. You'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half past one, time for dinner.

[Pg 53]

MARCH HARE

I only wish it was.

ALICE

That would be grand, certainly, but then—I shouldn't be hungry for it, you know.

HATTER

Not at first, perhaps, but you could keep it to half past one as long as you liked.

ALICE

Is that the way *you* manage?

HATTER

Not I, we quarreled last March—just before *he* went mad, you know. It was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts and I had to sing.

“Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!”

You know the song, perhaps.

ALICE

I've heard something like it.

DORMOUSE

Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle—

[Pg 54]

HATTER

Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse when the Queen bawled out, “He's murdering the time! Off with his head!”

ALICE

How dreadfully savage!

HATTER

And ever since that, he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now.

ALICE

Is that the reason so many tea things are put out here?

HATTER

Yes, that's it; it's always tea time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles.

ALICE

Then you keep moving round, I suppose?

HATTER

Exactly so, as the things get used up.

ALICE

But when you come to the beginning again?

[Pg 55]

MARCH HARE

Suppose we change the subject. I vote the young lady tells us a story.

ALICE

I'm afraid I don't know one.

MARCH HARE and HATTER

Then the Dormouse shall. Wake up Dormouse.

[*They pinch him on both sides at once.*]

DORMOUSE

[*Opens his eyes slowly and says in a hoarse, feeble voice.*]

I wasn't asleep, I heard every word you fellows were saying.

MARCH HARE

Tell us a story.

ALICE

Yes, please do!

HATTER

And be quick about it, or you'll be asleep again before it's done.

DORMOUSE

Once upon a time there were three little sisters, and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie and they lived at the bottom of a well—

[Pg 56]

ALICE

What did they live on?



DORMOUSE

They lived on treacle.

[Pg 57]

ALICE

They couldn't have done that, you know, they'd have been ill.

DORMOUSE

So they were, *very* ill.

ALICE

But why did they live at the bottom of a well?

MARCH HARE

Take some more tea.

ALICE

I've had nothing yet, so I can't take more.

HATTER

You mean, you can't take *less*; it's very easy to take *more* than nothing.

ALICE

Nobody asked *your* opinion.

HATTER

Who's making personal remarks now?

ALICE

[*Helps herself to tea and bread and butter.*]

Why did they live at the bottom of a well?

DORMOUSE

[Pg 58]

[*Takes a minute or two to think.*]

It was a treacle-well.

ALICE

There's no such thing!

HATTER and MARCH HARE

Sh! Sh!

DORMOUSE

If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story for yourself.

ALICE

[*Very humbly.*]

No, please go on. I won't interrupt you again. I dare say there may be *one*.

DORMOUSE

One, indeed! And so these three little sisters—they were learning to draw, you know—

ALICE

What did they draw?

DORMOUSE

Treacle.

[Pg 59]

HATTER

I want a clean cup. Let's all move one place on.

[*HATTER moves on, DORMOUSE takes his place, MARCH HARE takes DORMOUSE'S place and ALICE unwillingly takes MARCH HARE'S place.*]

ALICE

I'm worse off than I was before. You've upset the milk jug into your plate.

MARCH HARE

It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE

Where did they draw the treacle from?

HATTER

You can draw water out of a water well, so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle well—eh, stupid?

ALICE

But they were *in* the well.

DORMOUSE

Of course they were—well in. They were learning to draw, and they drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M—

[Pg 60]

ALICE

Why with an M?



MARCH HARE

Why not?

[ALICE *is silent and confused*. HATTER *pinches* DORMOUSE *to wake him up*.]

[Pg 61]

DORMOUSE

[*Wakes with a little shriek and continues*.]

—that begins with an M, such as mousetraps and the moon and memory and muchness—you know you say things are “much of a muchness”—did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?

HATTER

Did you?

ALICE

Really now you ask me, I don't think—

HATTER

Then you shouldn't talk.

MARCH HARE

No!

ALICE

[*Rises and walks away*.]

You are very rude. It's the stupidest tea party I ever was at in all my life—

[WHITE RABBIT *enters carrying a huge envelope with a seal and crown on it*.]

MARCH HARE and HATTER

No room! no room!

[*Rabbit pays no attention to them but goes to the house and raps loudly*. A footman in livery with a round face and large eyes like a frog and powdered hair opens the door.]

[Pg 62]

WHITE RABBIT

For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

FROG

From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet.

[WHITE RABBIT *bows and goes out.*]

MARCH HARE and HATTER

[*To* WHITE RABBIT.]

No room! No room! No room!

[*The* FROG *disappears into the house but leaves the door open. There is a terrible din and many sauce pans fly out.*]

MARCH HARE

She's at it again.

HATTER

It's perfectly disgusting.

MARCH HARE

Let's move on.

[*The platform moves off with table, chairs, MARCH HARE, HATTER, and DORMOUSE. Meanwhile the* FROG *has come out again and is sitting near the closed door, staring stupidly at the sky. ALICE goes to the door timidly and knocks.*]

[Pg 63]

FROG

There's no sort of use in knocking, and that for two reasons: first, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are; secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you.

ALICE

Please then, how am I to get in?

FROG

There might be some sense in your knocking if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were *inside*, you might knock, and I could let you out, you know.

ALICE

How am I to get in?

FROG

I shall sit here, till tomorrow.

[*The door opens and a large plate skims out straight at the* FROG *'s head; it grazes his nose and breaks into pieces.*]

[*FROG acts as if nothing had happened.*]

Or next day, maybe.

[Pg 64]

ALICE

How am I to get in?

FROG

Are you to get in at all? That's the first question, you know.

ALICE

It's really dreadful the way all you creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy.

FROG

I shall sit here, on and off, for days and days.

ALICE

But what am I to do?

FROG

Anything you like.

[He begins to whistle.]

ALICE

Where's the servant whose business it is to answer the door?

FROG

Which door?

ALICE

This door, of course!

[The FROG looks at the door, and rubs his thumb on it to see if the paint will come off.]



[Larger Image](#)

FROG: I shall sit here till tomorrow.



FROG

To answer the door? What's it been asking for?

ALICE

I don't know what you mean.

[Pg 66]

FROG

I speaks English, doesn't I? Or are you deaf? What did it ask you?

ALICE

Nothing! I've been knocking at it.

FROG

Shouldn't do that—shouldn't do that, vexes it, you know.

[*He kicks the door.*]

You let *it* alone, and it'll let *you* alone, you know.

ALICE

Oh, there's no use talking to you—

[*She starts to open the door just as the DUCHESS comes out carrying a pig in baby's clothes. She sneezes—FROG sneezes and ALICE sneezes.*]

DUCHESS

If everybody minded her own business—

[*She sneezes.*]

ALICE

It's pepper.

DUCHESS

Of course, my cook puts it in the soup.

[Pg 67]

ALICE

There's certainly too much pepper in the soup.

DUCHESS

Sneeze then and get rid of it!

[DUCHESS *begins to sing to the baby, giving it a violent shake at the end of every line of the lullaby.*]

"Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes;

[FROG *and* ALICE *sneeze.*]

He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.

[DUCHESS *sneezes*, FROG *sneezes*, ALICE *sneezes.*]

I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes;

[FROG *sneezes*, ALICE *sneezes.*]

For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases!"

[DUCHESS *sneezes*, FROG *sneezes*, ALICE *sneezes*, DUCHESS *gasps and gives a tremendous sneeze.*]

ALICE

Oh dear!

[*She jumps aside as kettles and pots come flying out of the door. The DUCHESS pays no attention.*]

What a cook to have!

[*She calls inside.*]

Oh! *please* mind what you're doing!

[*Another pan comes out and almost hits the baby.*]

Oh! there goes his *precious* nose!

[Pg 68]

DUCHESS

If everybody minded her own business, the world would go round a deal faster than it does.

ALICE

Which would not be an advantage. Just think what work it would make with the day and night! You see the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis—

DUCHESS

Talking of axes, chop off her head!

[*The head of a grinning Cheshire cat appears in a tree above a wall.*]

ALICE

Oh, what's that?

DUCHESS

Cat, of course.

ALICE

Why does it grin like that?

DUCHESS

It's a Cheshire cat! and that's why. [*To baby.*] Pig!



[Larger Image](#)

DUCHESS: I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes.

[Pg 69]

ALICE

I didn't know that Cheshire cats always grinned; in fact, I didn't know that cats *could* grin.

DUCHESS

They all can and most of 'em do.

ALICE

I don't know of any that do.

DUCHESS

You don't know much and that's a fact. Here, you may nurse it a bit, if you like!

[*Flings the baby at ALICE.*]

I must go and get ready to play croquet with the Queen.

[*She goes into the house.*]

ALICE

If I don't take this child away with me, they're sure to kill it in a day or two. Cheshire Puss, would you tell me please, which way I ought to walk from here?

CAT

That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.

ALICE

I don't much care where—

CAT

Then it doesn't matter which way you walk.

[Pg 70]

ALICE

So long as I get *somewhere*.

CAT

Oh, you're sure to do that, if you only walk long enough.

ALICE

Please, will you tell me what sort of people live about here?

CAT

All mad people.

ALICE

But I don't want to go among mad people.

CAT

Oh, you can't help that; we're all mad here. I'm mad. He's mad. He's dreaming now, and what do you think he's dreaming about?

ALICE

[*Goes to the FROG to scrutinize his face.*]

Nobody could guess that.

[Pg 71]

CAT

Why, about you! And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?

ALICE

Where I am now, of course.

CAT

Not you. You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream; and you're mad too.

ALICE

How do you know I'm mad?

CAT

You must be, or you wouldn't have come here.

ALICE

How do you know that you're mad?

CAT

To begin with, a dog's not mad. You grant that?

ALICE

I suppose so.

CAT

Well then, you see a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now I growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore I'm mad.

[Pg 72]

ALICE

I call it purring, not growling.



CAT

Call it what you like. Do you play croquet with the Queen today?

[Pg 73]

ALICE

I should like it very much, but I haven't been invited yet.

CAT

You'll see me there.

[*Vanishes.*]

ALICE

[*To squirming baby.*]

Oh, dear, it's heavy and so ugly. Don't grunt—Oh—Oh—it's a—pig. Please Mr. Footman take it!

FROG

[*Rises with dignity, whistles and disappears into the house; a kettle comes bounding out. ALICE puts pig down and it crawls off.*]

CAT

[*Appearing again.*]

By-the-bye, what became of the baby?

ALICE

It turned into a pig.

CAT

I thought it would.

[*Vanishes.*]

[*FROG comes out of the house with hedgehogs and flamingoes.*]

[Pg 74]

CAT

[*Reappearing.*]

Did you say pig, or fig?

ALICE

I said pig; and I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly; you make one quite giddy.

CAT

All right. [*It vanishes slowly.*]

[*FROG puts flamingoes down and reenters house. While ALICE is examining the flamingoes curiously, TWEEDLEDUM and TWEEDLEDEE, each with an arm round the other's neck, sidestep in and stand looking at ALICE.*]

ALICE

[*Turns, sees them, starts in surprise and involuntarily whispers.*]

Tweedle—dee.

DUM

Dum!

DEE

If you think we're waxworks, you ought to pay.

[Pg 75]

DUM

Contrariwise, if you think we're alive, you ought to speak.

DEE

The first thing in a visit is to say "How d'ye do?" and shake hands!

[*The brothers give each other a hug, then hold out the two hands that are free, to shake hands with her. ALICE does not like shaking hands with either of them first, for fear of hurting the other one's feelings; she takes hold of both hands at once and they all dance round in a ring, quite naturally to music, "Here we go round the mulberry bush."*]

ALICE

Would you tell me which road leads out of—

DEE

What shall I repeat to her?

DUM

The "Walrus and the Carpenter" is the longest.

[*Gives his brother an affectionate hug.*]

DEE

The sun was shining—

ALICE

If it's very long, would you please tell me first which road—

[Pg 76]

DEE

The moon was shining sulkily.

DUM

The sea was wet as wet could be—

DEE

O Oysters, come and walk with us
The Walrus did beseech—

DUM

[*Looks at DEE.*]

A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach—

DEE

[*Looks at DUM.*]

The eldest Oyster winked his eye
And shook his heavy head—

DUM

[*Looks at DEE.*]

Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster bed.

DEE

But four young Oysters hurried up
And yet another four—

[Pg 77]

DUM

And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more—

DEE

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so,

DUM

And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low,

DEE

And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

DUM

“A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,
“Is what we chiefly need.

DEE

Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed.”

DUM

“But not on us!” the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.

[Pg 78]

DEE

“The night is fine,” the Walrus said,

"Do you admire the view?"

DUM

The Carpenter said nothing but
"Cut us another slice.
I wish you were not quite so deaf—
I've had to ask you twice!"

DEE

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,
"To play them such a trick,
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!"

DUM

"O, Oysters," said the Carpenter,
"You've had a pleasant run!"

DEE

Shall we be trotting home again?"

DUM

But answer came there none—

DEE

And this was scarcely odd, because

DUM

They'd eaten every—

DEE

[*Interrupts in a passion, pointing to a white rattle on the ground.*]

Do you see *that*?

ALICE

It's only a rattle—

DUM

[*Stamps wildly and tears his hair.*]

I knew it was! It's spoilt of course. My nice new rattle!

[*To DEE.*]

You agree to have a battle?

[*He collects sauce pans and pots.*]

DEE

[*Picks up a sauce pan.*]

I suppose so. Let's fight till dinner.

[*They go out hand in hand.*]

ALICE

[*Hears music.*]

I wonder what is going to happen next.

[*She backs down stage respectfully as the KING and QUEEN OF HEARTS enter, followed by the KNAVE OF HEARTS carrying the KING'S crown on a crimson velvet cushion, and the WHITE RABBIT*

and others. When they come opposite to ALICE they stop and look at her.]

[The DUCHESS comes out of her house.]

[Pg 80]

QUEEN

[To the KNAVE.]

Who is this?



KNAVE

[Bows three times, smiles and giggles.]

[Pg 81]

QUEEN

Idiot! What's your name, child?

ALICE

My name is Alice, so please your Majesty.

QUEEN

Off with her head! Off—

ALICE

Nonsense!

KING

Consider, my dear, she is only a child.

QUEEN

Can you play croquet?

ALICE

Yes.

QUEEN

Come on then. Get to your places. Where are the mallets?

DUCHESS

Here.

[*The FROG appears with the flamingoes and hedgehogs.*]

[Pg 82]

QUEEN

Off with his head!

[*No one pays any attention.*]

KNAVE

What fun!

ALICE

What is the fun?

KNAVE

Why she; it's all her fancy, that. They never execute anyone.

ALICE

What does one do?

QUEEN

Get to your places!

[*She takes a flamingo, uses its neck as a mallet and a hedgehog as a ball. The FROG doubles himself into an arch. The KING does the same with the followers and the KNAVE offers himself as an arch for ALICE. Even though ALICE does not notice him he holds the arch position. The QUEEN shouts at intervals, "Off with his head, off with her head."*]

ALICE

Where are the Chess Queens?

[Pg 83]

RABBIT

Under sentence of execution.

ALICE

What for?

RABBIT

Did you say, "what a pity"?

ALICE

No, I didn't. I don't think it's at all a pity. I said, "What for?"

RABBIT

They boxed the Queen's ears.

[*ALICE gives a little scream of laughter.*]

RABBIT

Oh, hush! The Queen will hear you! You see they came rather late and the Queen said—Oh dear, the Queen hears me—

[*He hurries away.*]

ALICE

[*Noticing the KNAVE who still pretends to be an arch.*]

How *can* you go on thinking so quietly, with your head downwards?

[Pg 84]

KNAVE

What does it matter where my body happens to be? My mind goes on working just the same. The fact of it is, the more head downwards I am, the more I keep on inventing new things.

KING

Did you happen to meet any soldiers, my dear, as you came through the wood?

ALICE

Yes, I did; several thousand I should think.

KING

Four thousand, two hundred and seven, that's the exact number. They couldn't send all the horses, you know, because two of them are wanted in the game. And I haven't sent the two messengers, either.

ALICE

What's the war about?

KING

The red Chess King has the whole army against us but he can't kill a man who has thirteen hearts.

[*The DUCHESS, QUEEN, FROG, and followers go out. The KNAVE and the FIVE-SPOT, SEVEN-SPOT, and NINE-SPOT OF HEARTS stand behind the KING.*]



[Larger Image](#)

KING: I only wish I had such eyes; to be able to see Nobody!

KING

Just look along the road and tell me if you can see either of my messengers.

[Pg 85]

ALICE

I see nobody on the road.

KING

I only wish I had such eyes; to be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people, by this light.

ALICE

I see somebody now! But he's coming very slowly—and what curious attitudes he goes into—skipping up and down, and wriggling like an eel.

KING

Not at all, those are Anglo-Saxon attitudes. He only does them when he's happy. I must have two messengers, you know—to come and go. One to come and one to go.

ALICE

I beg your pardon?

KING

It isn't respectable to beg.

[Pg 86]

ALICE

I only meant that I didn't understand. Why one to come and one to go?

KING

Don't I tell you? I must have two—to fetch and carry. One to fetch, and one to carry.

MARCH HARE

[*Enters, pants for breath—waves his hands about and makes fearful faces at the KING.*]

KING

You alarm me! I feel faint—give me a ham sandwich. Another sandwich!

MARCH HARE

There's nothing but hay left now.

KING

Hay, then. There's nothing like eating hay when you're faint.

ALICE

I should think throwing cold water over you would be better.

KING

I didn't say there was nothing *better*; I said there was nothing *like* it.

[Pg 87]

KING

Who did you pass on the road?

MARCH HARE

Nobody.

KING

Quite right; this young lady saw him too. So of course Nobody walks slower than you.

MARCH HARE

I do my best; I'm sure nobody walks much faster than I do.

KING

He can't do that; or else he'd have been here first. However, now you've got your breath, you may tell us what's happened in the town.

MARCH HARE

I'll whisper it.

[*Much to ALICE's surprise, he shouts into the KING's ear.*]

They're at it again!

KING

Do you call *that* a whisper? If you do such a thing again, I'll have you buttered. It went through and through my head like an earthquake. Give me details, quick!

[*The KING and MARCH HARE go out, followed by FIVE, SEVEN, and NINE SPOTS.*]

[Pg 88]

DUCHESS

[*Runs in and tucks her arm affectionately into ALICE's.*]

You can't think how glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing!

ALICE

Oh!

DUCHESS

You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I can't tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit.

ALICE

Perhaps it hasn't one.

DUCHESS

Tut, tut, child! Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.

[*Squeezes closely, digs her chin into ALICE's shoulder, and roughly drags ALICE along for a walk.*]

ALICE

The game's going on rather better now.

[Pg 89]

DUCHESS

'Tis so, and the moral of that is—"Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!"

ALICE

Somebody said, that it's done by everybody minding their own business.

DUCHESS

Ah, well! It means much the same thing, and the moral of *that* is—"Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."

ALICE

How fond you are of finding morals in things.

DUCHESS

I daresay you're wondering why I don't put my arm round your waist. The reason is, that I'm doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Shall I try the experiment?

ALICE

He might bite.

DUCHESS

Very true; flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is—"Birds of a feather flock together."

[Pg 90]

ALICE

Only mustard isn't a bird.

DUCHESS

Right, as usual; what a clear way you have of putting things.

ALICE

It's a mineral, I *think*.

DUCHESS

Of course it is; there's a large mustard mine near here. And the moral of that is—"The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours."

ALICE

Oh! I know, it's a vegetable. It doesn't look like one, but it is.

DUCHESS

I quite agree with you, and the moral of that is—"Be what you would seem to be;" or, if you'd like it put more simply, "Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise."

ALICE

I think I should understand that better if I had it written down, but I can't quite follow it as you say it.

[Pg 91]

DUCHESS

That's nothing to what I could say if I chose.

ALICE

Pray don't trouble yourself to say it any longer than that.

DUCHESS

Oh, don't talk about trouble; I make you a present of everything I've said as yet.

ALICE

Uhm!

DUCHESS

Thinking again?

ALICE

I've got a right to think.

DUCHESS

Just about as much right as pigs have to fly, and the moral—

[*The arm of the DUCHESS begins to tremble and her voice dies down. The QUEEN OF HEARTS stands before them with folded arms and frowning like a thunderstorm.*]

DUCHESS

A fine day, your Majesty.

QUEEN

Now, I give you fair warning, either you or your head must be off, and that in about half no time. Take your choice!

[*The DUCHESS goes meekly into the house.*]

[Pg 92]



QUEEN

Let's go on with the game.

[*She goes off and shouts at intervals, "Off with his head; off with her head."*]

CAT

How are you getting on?

ALICE

It's no use speaking to you till your ears have come. I don't think they play at all fairly and they all quarrel so and they don't seem to have any rules in particular. And you've no idea how confusing it is with all the things alive; there's the arch I've got to go through next walking about at the other end of the ground—and I should have croqueted the Queen's hedgehog just now, only it ran away when it saw mine coming.

[*Music begins.*]

CAT

How do you like the Queen?

ALICE

Not at all; she's so extremely—

[*The KING, QUEEN and entire court enter. The QUEEN is near to ALICE. The music stops and all look at ALICE questioningly.*]

[Pg 93]

[ALICE *tries to propitiate the* QUEEN.]

—likely to win,

[*Music continues.*]

that it's hardly worth while finishing the game.

[QUEEN *smiles and passes on.*]

[Pg 94]

KING

Who *are* you talking to?

ALICE

It's a friend of mine—a Cheshire Cat—allow me to introduce it.

KING

I don't like the look of it at all; however, it may kiss my hand if it likes.

CAT

I'd rather not.

KING

Don't be impertinent and don't look at me like that.

ALICE

A cat may look at a king. I've read that in some book, but I don't remember where.

KING

Well, it must be removed. My dear! I wish you would have this cat removed.

QUEEN

Off with his head!

[Pg 95]

KNAVE

But you can't cut off a head unless there's a body to cut it off from.

KING

Anything that has a head can be beheaded.

QUEEN

If something isn't done about it in less than no time, I'll have everybody executed, all round.

ALICE

It belongs to the Duchess; you'd better ask her about it.

DUCHESS

It's a lie!

CAT

You'd better ask me. Do it if you can.

[*It grins away. The* DUCHESS *and* FROG *escape into the house.*]

QUEEN

Cut it off!

KING

It's gone.

[Pg 96]

EVERYBODY

It's gone! It's gone! Where, where, where—

QUEEN

Cut it off. Cut them all off!

EVERYBODY

No, no, no!

ALICE

Save me, save me!

KNAVE

[Shouts to ALICE and gives her a tart for safety.]

Take a tart!

QUEEN

[Seeing ALICE stand out a moment from the others.]

Cut hers off! Cut hers off!

OTHERS

[Glad to distract QUEEN'S attention from themselves.]

Cut hers off, cut hers off, cut—

ALICE

[Cries in fear and takes a quick bite at the tart. If there is a trap door on the stage ALICE disappears down it, leaving the crowd circling around the hole screaming and amazed. If the stage has no trap door, a bridge is built across the footlights with stairs leading down into the orchestra pit. When the crowd is chasing ALICE she jumps over the footlights onto the bridge and as the curtain is falling dividing her from the crowd she appeals to the audience, "Save me, save me, who will save me?" and runs down the stairs and disappears.]

[Pg 97]

CURTAIN

ACT III

[Pg 98]

SCENE ONE

Is a garden of high, very conventional and artificial looking flowers. On a large mushroom sits the CATERPILLAR smoking a hookah. ALICE is whirling about trying to get her equilibrium after her fall. She goes to the mushroom timidly and, conscious of her size, for her chin reaches the top of the mushroom, she gazes at the CATERPILLAR wonderingly. He looks at her lazily and speaks in a languid voice.

CATERPILLAR

Who are you?

ALICE

I—I hardly know, sir, just at present. The Queen frightened me so and I've had an awfully funny fall down a tunnel or a sort of well. At least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.

CATERPILLAR

What do you mean by that? Explain yourself.

[Pg 99]

ALICE

I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Sir, because I'm not myself, you see. Being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.



CATERPILLAR

You! Who are you?

[Pg 100]

ALICE

I think you ought to tell me who you are, first.

CATERPILLAR

Why?

[As ALICE *turns away.*]

Come back. I've something important to say.

[ALICE *comes back.*]

Keep your temper.

ALICE

Is that all?

CATERPILLAR

No.

[He puffs at the hookah in silence; finally takes it out of his mouth and unfolds his arms.]

So you think you're changed, do you?

ALICE

I'm afraid I am, Sir; I don't keep the same size.

CATERPILLAR

What size do you want to be?

ALICE

I don't know. At least I've never been so small as a caterpillar.

[Pg 101]

CATERPILLAR

[Rears angrily.]

It is a very good height indeed.

ALICE

But I'm not used to it; I wish you wouldn't all be so easily offended.

CATERPILLAR

You'll get used to it in time.

ALICE

Are you too big or am I too small?

[She compares her height wonderingly with the tall flowers.]

CATERPILLAR

[Looks at her sleepily, yawns, shakes himself, slides down from the mushroom and crawls slowly away.]

One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.

ALICE

One side of what? The other side of what?

CATERPILLAR

Of the mushroom.

[ALICE hesitates, then embraces mushroom and picks bit from each side.]

[Pg 102]

[Three gardeners representing spades enter carrying brushes and red paint cans.]

TWO-SPOT

Look out now, Five. Don't go splashing paint over me like that.

FIVE-SPOT

I couldn't help it. Seven jogged my elbow.

SEVEN-SPOT

That's right, Five, always lay the blame on others.

FIVE-SPOT

You'd better not talk. I heard the Queen say only yesterday you deserved to be beheaded.

TWO-SPOT

What for?

SEVEN-SPOT

That's none of your business, Two.

FIVE-SPOT

Yes, it is his business, and I'll tell him. It was for bringing the cook tulip roots instead of onions.

[Pg 103]

SEVEN-SPOT

Well, of all the unjust things—

[*Sees ALICE; others look around, all bow.*]

ALICE

Could you please tell me what side to eat?

[FIVE and SEVEN look at TWO.]

TWO-SPOT

I don't know anything about it.

[*He paints a white rose, red.*]

You ought to have been red, we put you in by mistake, and if the Queen was to find it out we should all have our heads cut off.

[*A thumping is heard off stage and the music grows louder and louder.*]

ALICE

What's that?

FIVE-SPOT

The White Chess Queen.

SEVEN-SPOT

Don't let her see what we are doing.

TWO-SPOT

She'll tell on us.

[Pg 104]

SEVEN-SPOT

Run out and stop her from coming here.

FIVE-SPOT

[*To ALICE as she runs to the right.*]

No, no, the other way.

ALICE

But she's off there!

TWO-SPOT

You can only meet her by walking the other way.

ALICE

Oh! what nonsense.

ALL THE GARDENERS

Go the other way!

ALICE

[*Re-enters in dismay and dashes out to the left.*]

She's running away from me.

[*The WHITE QUEEN backs in from right and ALICE backs in from left. They meet. The gardeners cry "The Queen" and throw themselves flat upon the ground; their backs are like the backs of the rest of the pack. Music stops. ALICE looks at the QUEEN curiously.*]

[Pg 105]

ALICE

Oh, there you are! Why, I'm just the size I was when I saw you last.

WHITE QUEEN

Of course you are, and who are these? I can't tell them by their backs.

[*She turns them over with her foot.*]

Turn over. Ah! I thought so! Get up! What have you been doing here?

TWO-SPOT

May it please your Majesty, we were trying—

WHITE QUEEN

[*Examines rose.*]

I see! Begone, or I'll send the horses after you, and tell the Queen of Hearts.

[*GARDENERS rush off. The RED QUEEN enters. ALICE has gone to the mushroom again to look at its sides and there to her amazement finds a gold crown and scepter, which she immediately appropriates. Music. The QUEENS watch ALICE superciliously. ALICE puts on her crown, proudly exclaiming in great elation, "Queen Alice," and walks down stage bowing right and left to the homage of imaginary subjects. She repeats as if scarcely daring to believe it true, "Queen Alice." Music stops.*]

[Pg 106]

RED QUEEN

Ridiculous!

ALICE

Isn't this the Eighth Square?

RED QUEEN

You can't be a Queen, you know, till you've passed the proper examination.

WHITE QUEEN

The sooner we begin it, the better.

ALICE

Please, would you tell me—

RED QUEEN

Speak when you're spoken to.

ALICE

But if everybody obeyed that rule, and if you only spoke when you were spoken to, and the other person always waited for you to begin, you see nobody would ever say anything, so that—

RED QUEEN

Preposterous.

[Pg 107]

ALICE

I only said "if."

RED QUEEN

She says she only said "if."

WHITE QUEEN

[*Moans and wrings her hands.*]

But she said a great deal more than that. Ah, yes, so much more than that.

RED QUEEN

So you did, you know; always speak the truth—think before you speak—and write it down afterwards.

ALICE

I'm sure I didn't mean—

RED QUEEN

That's just what I complained of. You *should* have meant! What do you suppose is the use of a child without any meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning—and a child's more important than a joke, I hope. You couldn't deny that, even if you tried with both hands.

ALICE

I don't deny things with my *hands*.

[Pg 108]

RED QUEEN

Nobody said you did. I said you couldn't if you tried.

WHITE QUEEN

She's in that state of mind, that she wants to deny *something*—only she doesn't know what to deny!

RED QUEEN

A nasty, vicious temper. I invite you to Alice's dinner party this afternoon.

WHITE QUEEN

And I invite *you*.

ALICE

I didn't know I was to have a party at all; but if there is to be one, I think I ought to invite the guests.

RED QUEEN

We gave you the opportunity of doing it, but I dare say you've not had many lessons in manners yet.

ALICE

Manners are not taught in lessons; lessons teach you to do sums, and things of that sort.

WHITE QUEEN

Can you do addition? What's one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?

[Pg 109]

ALICE

I don't know. I lost count.

RED QUEEN

She can't do addition; can you do subtraction? Take nine from eight.

ALICE

Nine from eight I can't, you know, but—

WHITE QUEEN

She can't do subtraction. Can you do division? Divide a loaf by a knife—what's the answer to that?

ALICE

I suppose—

RED QUEEN

[*Answers for her.*]

Bread and butter, of course. Try another subtraction sum. Take a bone from a dog; what remains?

ALICE

The bone wouldn't remain, of course, if I took it—and the dog wouldn't remain; it would come to bite me—and I'm sure I shouldn't remain.

[Pg 110]

RED QUEEN

Then you think nothing would remain?

ALICE

I think that's the answer.

RED QUEEN

Wrong as usual; the dog's temper would remain.

ALICE

But I don't see how—

RED QUEEN

Why, look here; the dog would lose its temper, wouldn't it?

ALICE

Perhaps it would.

RED QUEEN

Then if the dog went away, its temper would remain!

ALICE

They might go different ways! What dreadful nonsense we *are* talking.

BOTH QUEENS

She can't do sums a bit!

[Pg 111]

ALICE

Can *you* do sums?

WHITE QUEEN

I can do addition, if you give me time—but I can't do *subtraction* under *any* circumstances.

RED QUEEN

Of course you know your A, B, C?

ALICE

To be sure I do.

WHITE QUEEN

So do I; we'll often say it over together, dear. And I'll tell you a secret—I can read words of one letter. Isn't that grand? However, don't be discouraged. You'll come to it in time.

RED QUEEN

Can you answer useful questions? How is bread made?

ALICE

I know *that!* You take some flour—

WHITE QUEEN

Where do you pick the flower? In a garden or in the hedges?

[Pg 112]

ALICE

Well, it isn't *picked* at all. It's ground—

WHITE QUEEN

How many acres of ground? You mustn't leave out so many things.

RED QUEEN

Fan her head! She'll be feverish after so much thinking.

[*They fan her with bunches of leaves which blow her hair wildly.*]

ALICE

Please—please—

RED QUEEN

She's all right again now. Do you know languages? What's the French for fiddle-de-dee?

ALICE

Fiddle-de-dee's not English.

RED QUEEN

Who ever said it was?

ALICE

If you tell me what language fiddle-de-dee is, I'll tell you the French for it!

[Pg 113]

RED QUEEN

Queens never make bargains!

ALICE

I wish Queens never asked questions!

WHITE QUEEN

Don't let us quarrel; what is the cause of lightning?

ALICE

The cause of lightning is the thunder—no, no! I meant the other way.

RED QUEEN

It's too late to correct it; when you've once said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences.

WHITE QUEEN

We had *such* a thunderstorm next Tuesday, you can't think.

RED QUEEN

She *never* could, you know.

WHITE QUEEN

Part of the roof came off, and ever so much thunder got in—and it went rolling round the room in great lumps—and knocking over the tables and things—till I was so frightened, I couldn't remember my own name!

[Pg 114]

ALICE

I never should *try* to remember my name in the middle of an accident. Where would be the use of it?

RED QUEEN

You must excuse her. She means well, but she can't help saying foolish things, as a general rule. She never was really well brought up, but it's amazing how good tempered she is! Pat her on the head, and see how pleased she'll be! A little kindness and putting her hair in papers would do wonders with her.

WHITE QUEEN

[*Gives a deep sigh and leans her head on ALICE's shoulder.*]

I *am* so sleepy!

RED QUEEN

She's tired, poor thing; smooth her hair—lend her your night cap—and sing her a soothing lullaby.

ALICE

I haven't got a night cap with me, and I don't know any soothing lullabies.



[Larger Image](#)

ALICE: Do wake up, you heavy things!

RED QUEEN

I must do it myself, then.

Hush-a-by lady, in Alice's lap!
Till the feast's ready, we've time for a nap;
When the feast's over, we'll go to the ball—
Red Queen and White Queen and Alice and all!

[Pg 115]

And now you know the words.

[*She puts her head on ALICE's other shoulder.*]

Just sing it through to *me*. I'm getting sleepy too.

[*Both queens fall fast asleep and snore loudly.*]

ALICE

What *am* I to do? Take care of two Queens asleep at once? Do wake up, you heavy things!

[*All lights go out, leaving a mysterious glow on ALICE and the queens.*]

WHITE RABBIT

[*Blows trumpet off stage.*]

The trial's beginning!

ALICE

What trial is it?

WHITE RABBIT

Who stole the tarts.

ALICE

I ate a tart.

WHITE RABBIT

You've got to be tried.

[Pg 116]

ALICE

I don't want to be tried.

WHITE RABBIT

You've got to be tried.

ALICE

I won't be tried—I won't-I won't!

SCENE TWO

Is a court room suggesting playing cards. The jurymen are all kinds of creatures. The KING and QUEEN OF HEARTS are seated on the throne. The KNAVE is before them in chains. The WHITE RABBIT has a trumpet in one hand, and a scroll of parchment in the other. In the middle of the court stands a table with a large dish of tarts upon it.

WHITE RABBIT

[Blows three blasts on his trumpet.]

Silence in the court!

ALICE

[Watches jurymen writing busily on their slates.]

What are they doing? They can't have anything to put down yet, before the trial's begun.

[Pg 117]

KNAVE

They're putting down their names for fear they should forget them before the end of the trial.

ALICE

Stupid things!

WHITE RABBIT

Silence in the court!

JURORS

[Write in chorus.]

Stupid things!

ONE JUROR

How do you spell stupid?

ALICE

A nice muddle their slates will be in before the trial's over.

QUEEN

There's a pencil squeaking. Cut it down!

JURORS

[In chorus as they write.]

Squeaking—

KING

[Pg 118]

[Wears a crown over his wig; puts on his spectacles as he says.]

Herald, read the accusation!



WHITE RABBIT

[Blows three blasts on his trumpet, unrolls parchment scroll and reads to music.]

The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts,
All on a summer day;
The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts,
And took them quite away!

[Pg 119]

KING

Consider your verdict!

WHITE RABBIT

Not yet, not yet; there's a great deal to come before that.

KING

Call the first witness.

WHITE RABBIT

First witness!

HATTER

[Comes in with a teacup in one hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other.]

I beg your pardon, your Majesty, for bringing these in, but I hadn't quite finished my tea when I was sent for.

KING

You ought to have finished; when did you begin?

HATTER

[Looks at the MARCH HARE, who follows him arm-in-arm with the DORMOUSE.]

Fourteenth of March, I *think* it was.

[Pg 120]

MARCH HARE

Fifteenth.

DORMOUSE

Sixteenth.

KING

Write that down.

JURY

Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen—forty-five. Reduce that to shillings—

KING

Take off your hat.

HATTER

It isn't mine.

KING

Stolen!

JURY

Stolen!

HATTER

I keep them to sell. I've none of my own. I'm a hatter.

[Pg 121]

QUEEN OF HEARTS

[*Puts on her spectacles and stares at HATTER, who fidgets uncomfortably.*]

KING

Give your evidence and don't be nervous, or I'll have you executed on the spot.

[*The HATTER continues to shift nervously from one foot to the other, looks uneasily at the QUEEN, trembles so that he shakes off both of his shoes, and in his confusion bites a large piece out of his teacup instead of the bread and butter.*]

HATTER

I'm a poor man, your Majesty, and I hadn't but just begun my tea—not above a week or so—and what with the bread and butter getting so thin—and the twinkling of the tea—

KING

The twinkling of *what?*

HATTER

It began with the tea.

KING

Of course twinkling begins with a T. Do you take me for a dunce? Go on!

[Pg 122]

HATTER

I'm a poor man and most things twinkled after that—only the March Hare said—

MARCH HARE

I didn't!

HATTER

You did.

MARCH HARE

I deny it.

KING

He denies it; leave out that part.

QUEEN

But what did the Dormouse say?

HATTER

That I can't remember.

KING

You *must* remember or I'll have you executed.

HATTER

[Drops teacup and bread and butter and goes down on one knee.]

I'm a poor man, your Majesty.

[Pg 123]

KING

If that's all you know about it you may stand down.

HATTER

I can't go no lower; I'm on the floor as it is.

KING

Then you may sit down.

HATTER

I'd rather finish my tea.

KING

You may go.

[The HATTER goes out hurriedly, leaving one of his shoes behind.]

QUEEN

[Nonchalantly to an officer.]

And just take his head off outside.

[But the HATTER was out of sight before the officer could get to the door.]

KING

Call the next witness!

[Pg 124]

WHITE RABBIT

Next witness!

[The DUCHESS enters with a pepper pot, which she shakes about. Everybody begins to sneeze.]

MARCH HARE *sneezes and rushes out.*]

KING

Give your evidence!

DUCHESS

Shan't!

WHITE RABBIT

Your Majesty must cross-examine *this* witness.

KING

Well, if I must, I must. What does your cook say tarts are made of?

DUCHESS

Pepper.

[*The DUCHESS shakes the pot and the court sneezes.*]

DORMOUSE

Treacle!

[*The DUCHESS shakes the pot at him. He sneezes for the first time.*]

[Pg 125]

QUEEN

Collar the Dormouse! Behead the Dormouse! Turn that Dormouse out of court! Suppress him! Pinch him! Off with his whiskers!

[*The whole court is in confusion, turning the DORMOUSE out, and while it is settling down again the DUCHESS disappears.*]

WHITE RABBIT

The Duchess!

COURT

She's gone—she's gone.

KING

Never mind!

[*In a low tone to the QUEEN.*]

Really, my dear, *you* must cross-examine the next witness. It quite makes my forehead ache! Call the next witness!

WHITE RABBIT

[*Fumbles with the parchment, then cries in a shrill little voice.*]

Alice!

ALICE

Here!

[Pg 126]

KING

What do you know about this business?

ALICE

Nothing whatever.

KING

[*To the jury.*]

That's very important.

WHITE RABBIT

Unimportant, your Majesty means, of course.

KING

Unimportant, of course I meant. Important—unimportant—unimportant—important. Consider your verdict!

[*Some of the jury write "important" and some write "unimportant."*]

WHITE RABBIT

There's more evidence to come yet, please your Majesty; this paper has just been picked up.

QUEEN

What's in it?

WHITE RABBIT

[*Fumbles with a huge envelope.*]

I haven't opened it yet, but it seems to be a letter, written by the prisoner to—to somebody.

[Pg 127]

KING

It must have been that unless it was written to nobody, which isn't usual, you know.

ALICE

Who is it directed to?

WHITE RABBIT

It isn't directed at all; in fact, there's nothing written on the *outside*.

[*Takes out a tiny piece of paper.*]

It isn't a letter at all; it's a set of verses.

QUEEN

Are they in the prisoner's handwriting?

[*The jury brightens up.*]

WHITE RABBIT

[*Looks at the KNAVE'S hand. KNAVE hides his hand; the chains rattle.*]

No, they're not, and that's the queerest thing about it.

[*The jury looks puzzled.*]

KING

He must have imitated somebody else's hand!

KNAVE

Please, your Majesty, I didn't write it and they can't prove I did; there's no name signed at the end.

[Pg 128]

KING

If you didn't sign it that only makes the matter worse. You *must* have meant some mischief, or else you'd have signed your name like an honest man.

[*At this there is a general clapping of hands.*]

QUEEN

That *proves* his guilt.

ALICE

It proves nothing of the sort! Why, you don't even know what they're about.

KING

Read them!

WHITE RABBIT

[*Puts on his monocle.*]

Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?

KING

Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end, then stop.

[Pg 129]

WHITE RABBIT

"They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him;
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.

"I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Though they were mine before.

"My notion was that you had been
(Before she had this fit)
An obstacle that came between
Him, and ourselves, and it.

"Don't let him know she liked him best,
For this must ever be
A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me."

KING

That's the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet; so now let the jury—

ALICE

If anyone of them can explain it, I'll give him sixpence. I don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.

[Pg 130]

JURY

She doesn't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.

KING

If there's no meaning in it, that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn't try to find any. And yet I don't know.

[*Spreads out the verses on his knee and studies them.*]

I seem to see some meaning after all. "Said I could not swim." You can't swim, can you?

KNAVE

[*Shakes his head sadly and points to his suit.*]

Do I look like it?

KING

All right, so far; "We know it to be true," that's the jury, of course; "I gave her one, they gave him two" why that must be what he did with the tarts, you know—

ALICE

But it goes on "they all returned from *him* to *you*."

KING

[*Triumphantly pointing to the tarts.*]

Why, there they are! Nothing can be clearer than that. Then again, "before she had this fit," you never had fits, my dear, I think?

[Pg 131]

QUEEN

Never!

KING

Then the words don't *fit* you.

[*There is dead silence, while the KING looks around at the court with a smile.*]

KING

It's a pun!

[*Everybody laughs. Music.*]

KING

Let the jury consider their verdict.

QUEEN

No, no! Sentence first—verdict afterwards.

ALICE

Stuff and nonsense!

QUEEN

[*Furiously.*]

Hold your tongue!

ALICE

I won't!

[Pg 132]

QUEEN

Off with her head!

ALICE

Who cares for you?

QUEEN

Cut it off!

ALICE

You're nothing but a pack of cards!

[As lights go out and curtain falls all the characters hold their positions as if petrified.]

CURTAIN

SCENE THREE

[The curtain rises to show ALICE still asleep in the armchair, the fire in the grate suffusing her with its glow.]

CARROLL

Wake up, Alice, it is time for tea.

[Off stage the characters repeat their most characteristic lines, "Off with her head," "Consider your verdict," "Oh! my fur and whiskers"; the DUCHESS sneezes, the cat cries, as if the characters were fading away into the pack of real playing cards which shower through the mirror all over ALICE. There is music.]

[Pg 133]

ALICE

[Wakes, rises, and looks about in surprise and wonderment.]

Why—it was a dream!

CURTAIN

Text of title page:

Alice
in
Wonderland

A dramatization of Lewis Carroll's
"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and
"Through the Looking Glass"

by
Alice Gerstenberg
Author of
"The Conscience of Sarah Platt",
"Unquenched Fire," "A Little World," etc.

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