

Alice in Wonderland

a play
by

T.M. Camp

Based on the story
by Lewis Carroll

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Production Note

Alice in Wonderland was first performed on March 1, 1997 by the Alameda Children's Theatre in Alameda, California. The cast was as follows:

Alice	Ashley Stewart
Mad Hatter	Daniel Foster
White Rabbit	Justin Marshall
Caterpillar	Twyla Ruby
Duchess	Alice McNeill
Queen of Hearts	Emily Heller
King of Hearts	Ashton Playstead
Cheshire Cat	Heidi Cole / Christie O'Keefe
Dormouse	Caitlin Kenney
Gryphon	Danielle Grimm
Frog Footman	Grace McAvoy
A Piglet	Joey O'Keefe
Various cards, trees, bugs, servants, bats, statues, other animals, and echoes.	Danielle Barnes, Morgan Padway, Judi Pierce, Sonia Rabago, Megan Voss, Emily Zimmerman, and Laura Zimmerman

The production was directed and designed by Shannon Stowe with choreography by Hillary Harding, and original music composed and performed by Jen Braun, Ryan Stowe, and Arthur Diaz.

"I have a message for you from a friend of mine, Mr. Lewis Carroll, who is a queer sort of creature, rather too fond of talking nonsense. He told me you had once asked him to write another book like the one you had read - I forget the name - I think it was about 'malice.'"

- from the correspondence
of Charles L. Dodgson

Prologue:
All in the Golden Afternoon

The lights rise upon Alice and her older sister Lorina. They are sitting on the bank of a river, the water washing by with a gentle sound.

Lorina has a book open on her lap and Alice sits next to her, half-heartedly making a daisy chain.

Nearby, two dolls – Flotsam and Bedlam – lie forgotten and neglected.

Lorina reads, half-mumbling, to herself.

LORINA

"The forms which possess in some considerable degree the character of the species, but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations, that..."

...Alice yawns expansively, nudging the books closed.

LORINA

Alice, I'm trying to read.

Lorina shuffles through her pages and begins again...

LORINA

"...but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely..."

...Alice glances over into the book...

LORINA

...Alice!

ALICE

What are you reading?

A book. LORINA

What kind? ALICE

You wouldn't like it. No pictures. LORINA

None? ALICE

No, now hush. LORINA

She has found her place and picks up reading.

"The forms which possess..." LORINA

...none at all? ALICE

Alice, please. LORINA

Any conversations? ALICE

No, none at all. Now, really. LORINA

What is the use of a book without pictures or conversations? ALICE

Don't be impertinent, Alice. LORINA

Alice... FLOTSAM

...Alice... BEDLAM

...Alice was... FLOTSAM

...the forms which possess in some considerable degree the character... LORINA

...Alice... BEDLAM

...the forms... LORINA

...Alice... ALICE

...Alice... ALL BUT LORINA

...Alice was beginning... FLOTSAM AND BEDLAM

...shush now, I'm trying to read... LORINA

...beginning... BEDLAM

...which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them... LORINA

...Alice was... ALICE

...so closely linked... LORINA

...was... FLOTSAM

...Alice... ALICE

BEDLAM
...Alice was beginning...

ALL
...Alice.

BEDLAM
Alice was beginning to get very tired...

ALICE
...very tired...

LORINA
"...in some considerable degree the character of the species, but which are..."

FLOTSAM
...tired...

ALICE
...tired...

FLOTSAM
...Alice...

LORINA
"...other forms, or are..."

BEDLAM
...Alice was beginning to get very tired. Alice, Alice, Alice was...

FLOTSAM
...very tired...

BEDLAM
...to get...

ALICE
...very tired...

FLOTSAM
...Alice...

ALICE
...Alice...

LORINA
...Alice, hush...

BEDLAM
...Alice...

ALL BUT LORINA
...Alice was beginning to get very tired.

BEDLAM
Alice was beginning to get very tired of having...

ALICE
...very tired...

BEDLAM
...of sitting...

FLOTSAM
..of...

ALICE
...tired of sitting...

BEDLAM
...Alice was beginning, beginning, beginning...

ALICE
...beginning...

LORINA
"...linked to them by intermediate..."

BEDLAM
...tired of sitting and of having...

ALICE
...of...

BEDLAM
...Alice...

...tired... FLOTSAM

...the forms which possess..." LORINA

...of having nothing to... BEDLAM

...nothing... ALICE

...very... FLOTSAM

...nothing to... ALICE

...Alice was beginning... BEDLAM

...forms..." LORINA

...tired... ALICE

...nothing... FLOTSAM

...other forms..." LORINA

...nothing to... ALICE

...to... BEDLAM

...forms which possess..." LORINA

...nothing to do. ALL BUT LORINA

BEDLAM

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting and of having nothing to do.

LORINA

"The forms which possess in some considerable degree the character of the species, but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations, that..."

ALICE

What is the use of a book...

FLOTSAM

...thought Alice...

LORINA

"...other forms..."

ALICE

...without pictures or conversations?

LORINA

"...forms which possess..."

FLOTSAM

...Alice...

BEDLAM

...Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting and of having nothing to do...

ALICE

...nothing to do...

FLOTSAM

...nothing...

LORINA

"...linked to them by..."

ALICE

...nothing...

...nothing...	FLOTSAM
...nothing to...	ALICE
...nothing to do.	ALL BUT LORINA
When suddenly...	BEDLAM
...suddenly...	FLOTSAM
...a white rabbit...	BEDLAM
"...other forms..."	LORINA
...white rabbit...	ALICE
"...forms which possess..."	LORINA
...white...	FLOTSAM
...suddenly...	BEDLAM
...suddenly...	ALICE
"...other forms..."	LORINA
...a white rabbit...	BEDLAM
...suddenly a white rabbit...	ALICE

LORINA
"...the species..."

RABBIT
...late, late, late...

ALICE
...rabbit with pink eyes...

LORINA
"...other forms..."

FLOTSAM
...pink, pink...

ALICE
...rabbit with pink...

RABBIT
...late, late, late...

ALICE
...a white rabbit with pink eyes.

LORINA
"The forms which possess in some considerable degree the character of the species, but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations, that..."

ALICE
...a white rabbit...

FLOTSAM
...and...

BEDLAM
...and burning with curiosity...

ALICE
...a white rabbit...

BEDLAM
...she ran...

ALICE
...ran...

LORINA
"...closely linked..."

FLOTSAM
...burning...

BEDLAM
...she ran...

ALICE
...a white rabbit...

LORINA
...forms...

FLOTSAM
...she ran...

ALICE
...rabbit...

BEDLAM
...after him and fortunately, she ran across the field after
him, and fortunately she was just in time...

LORINA
"...by intermediate gradations, that..."

ALICE
...a white rabbit...

BEDLAM
...burning with curiosity...

FLOTSAM
...fortunately...

ALICE
...a white...

BEDLAM
...just in time to see...

...just... FLOTSAM

...just in time... BEDLAM

"...other forms..." LORINA

...time, time... FLOTSAM

...late, late, late... RABBIT

...a white rabbit... ALICE

...late... RABBIT

...fortunately... FLOTSAM

...fortunately was just in time to see him pop... BEDLAM

...pop... FLOTSAM

...see him pop down a large rabbit hole... BEDLAM

...pop... FLOTSAM

...a white rabbit... ALICE

"...the forms which possess..." LORINA

...pop... FLOTSAM

BEDLAM
...a large white rabbit...

ALICE
...a white rabbit...

BEDLAM
...in another moment down went Alice...

ALICE
...a white rabbit...

BEDLAM
...down went Alice...

LORINA
"...closely linked..."

FLOTSAM
...pop...

BEDLAM
...went Alice, down went Alice, down went Alice after him,
never once considering...

ALICE
...a white...

BEDLAM
...never...

LORINA
"...other forms..."

FLOTSAM
...pop...

ALICE
...white rabbit...

BEDLAM
...never once considering...

LORINA

"...the forms which possess in some considerable degree the character..."

ALICE

...a white rabbit...

FLOTSAM

...pop...

LORINA

"...the forms which possess..."

BEDLAM

...once considering how in the world she was to get out again...

LORINA

"...the forms which possess in some considerable degree the character of the species, but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations, that..."

FLOTSAM

...pop!

Silence.

ALL BUT LORINA

Down went Alice.

Long silence.

Act I: Alice Underground
Scene One: Down the Rabbit Hole

Alice is falling.

ALICE

I wonder . . . I wonder . . . I wonder...

...two bats show up, flapping out of the shadows, getting tangled in her hair, squeaking.

ALICE

I wonder . . . how many miles I've fallen by this time? I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth...

...the bats become a bit more bothersome...

BATS

...rah!

ALICE

Ugh. Do be quiet, you dear little horrid things . . . do you think it's polite to interrupt when others are speaking?

BAT ONE

Rah!

ALICE

"Rah" yourself!

BAT TWO

Rah!

ALICE

I wonder if I shall fall forever . . . do let me alone you little beasts . . . I wonder...

BAT TWO

...rah!

ALICE

Mind your manners now, Mister Bat. Or is it Miss? I wonder, I wonder . . . have I gone through the center of the earth yet, I wonder..?

BAT ONE

...rah!

ALICE

Hush now, and let me think. The earth is roughly four thousand miles down, I think...

BATS

...rah!

ALICE

Oh..!

...by now they've gotten a bit more menacing – tossing in an occasional "rah" for good measure – pulling at her hair and beating at her face with their wings.

ALICE

Oh my dear, please do stop. Ugh, let me alone, please! Down, down, down, will this fall never come to an end? Oh please let go, Mister Bat. I don't mean to be disturbing you, I'm sure. You see, I can't help falling . . . I didn't mean to start, and now that it's begun there's no way to stop, now is there? Oh, I do wish I were home. If Dinah were here she'd keep you away. She likes the little mice so, and you are so like mice – except for the wings, ugh, and you are a great deal more rude, I'm sure. Dinah would teach you a thing or two. But . . . do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats? Do bats eat cats? I wonder . . . do cats, bats do cats . . . I wonder . . . I wonder . . . I wonder . . . I wonder...

...during all of this, she comes to rest in a great hall...

ALICE

. . . oh! I wonder...

...The White Rabbit comes along, scampering past.

RABBIT

Oh, oh, oh, oh, muh-muh-muh-muh-my ears and and and wuh-wuh-wuh-wuh-whiskers, huh-huh-how luh-luh-late it's guh-guh-getting.

ALICE

Oh! Sir, please...

...he lets out a little scream, running off into the shadows.

ALICE

Oh dear. I wish...

ECHO

...I wish...

ALICE

...I wish he would wait...

ECHO

...wait...

...The White Rabbit comes scampering back along the hall, barrelling into her, knocking both of them down.

ALICE

Oh..!

ECHO

...oh..!

RABBIT

...aah..!

ECHO

...aah..!

The White Rabbit hops up and scampers away, leaving Alice to fend for herself in the next scene.

Act I: Alice Underground
Scene Two: The Pool of Tears

Alice calls after The White Rabbit.

Sir... ALICE

...sir... ECHO

...sir, please . . . is this, don't you..? ALICE

...don't you..? ECHO

...silence.

Where could he be going? I wonder... ALICE

...I wonder. ECHO

I wonder... ALICE

...wonder... ECHO

...there's certain to be a door around about here somewhere,
I am sure... ALICE

...sure... ECHO

...I beg your pardon..? ALICE

...pardon..? ECHO

...silence.

ALICE
That's curious, I could have sworn...

ECHO
...sworn...

ALICE
...there...!

ECHO
...there...!

ALICE
...Who's there..?

ECHO
...who's there..?

ALICE
...My name is Alice...

ECHO
...Alice..?

ALICE
...yes...

ECHO
...yes...

...silence.

ALICE
Who are you..?

ECHO
...who are you..?

ALICE
...Alice, my name is Alice...

ECHO
...Alice...

...*silence.*

Alice...	ECHO
...Alice...	ALICE
...Alice...	BEDLAM
...Alice . . . Alice...	FLOTSAM
...Alice found...	BEDLAM
...Alice found herself...	ALICE
...herself...	FLOTSAM
...Alice found herself in a long, low hall...	BEDLAM
...a long, low, Alice...	FLOTSAM
...Alice found herself...	BEDLAM
...Alice found...	FLOTSAM
...there were doors all round the hall, but...	BEDLAM
...but...	FLOTSAM
...doors all round the hall, but they were all...	BEDLAM

...locked... ALICE

...locked... FLOTSAM

...locked... ALICE

...locked... BEDLAM

...She walked slowly... FLOTSAM

...sadly... BEDLAM

...sadly down the middle... ALICE

...locked... BEDLAM

...middle, wondering... ALICE

...I wonder... BEDLAM

...wondering how she was ever going to get out again. FLOTSAM

Suddenly... ALICE

...suddenly... BEDLAM

...sudden... FLOTSAM

...suddenly she... BEDLAM

...she came upon a...

ALICE
...oh...!

BEDLAM
...a...

FLOTSAM
...oh...!

BEDLAM
...a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass...

ALICE
...oh...!

BEDLAM
...nothing...

FLOTSAM
...nothing...

ALICE
...nothing...

BEDLAM
...nothing on it but a...

ALICE
...oh...!

BEDLAM
...a tiny...

FLOTSAM
...Alice found...

BEDLAM
...upon it but a tiny silver...

FLOTSAM
...silver...

BEDLAM
...a...

ALICE
...a tiny...

BEDLAM
...silver...

FLOTSAM
...silver...

ALICE
...a tiny silver key!

BEDLAM
She came upon a tiny silver key...

ALICE
...a key...

BEDLAM
...and Alice's first idea...

ALICE
...oh...!

FLOTSAM
...was that this might...

ALICE
...this might...

FLOTSAM
...this might...

BEDLAM
...this...

ALICE
...this...

BEDLAM
...her very first thought...

ALICE
...this might belong to one of...

...this might... FLOTSAM

...belong to one of the... ALICE

...the... BEDLAM

...belong to one of the doors... ALICE

...one... BEDLAM

...one of, this might... FLOTSAM

...belong to... BEDLAM

...one of... FLOTSAM

...the doors... BEDLAM

...this might belong to one of the doors... ALICE

...but... BEDLAM

...but... FLOTSAM

...but alas...! BEDLAM

...the key... ALICE

...the key... FLOTSAM

...alas... BEDLAM

...alas... ALICE

...alas, Alice... FLOTSAM

...alas... ALICE

...but alas! The key was too small... BEDLAM

...the key... ALICE

...a tiny silver... FLOTSAM

...tiny... ALICE

...too small... BEDLAM

...silver... ALICE

...too small... FLOTSAM

...alas... ALICE

...the key was too small... FLOTSAM

...alas... ALICE

...or the locks were too big... BEDLAM

ALICE
... alas...

BEDLAM
...at any rate, it would not open any...

FLOTSAM
...alas...

BEDLAM
...would not open any of the doors...

ALICE
...alas...

BEDLAM
...alas, poor Alice.

FLOTSAM
However...

ALICE
...oh...!

FLOTSAM
...however...

BEDLAM
...however, on the second time round she came upon...

FLOTSAM
...oh...!

ALICE
...oh...!

BEDLAM
...upon a...

ALICE
...oh...!

BEDLAM
...a little door...

...a little... ALICE

...a little... FLOTSAM

...a little door... ALICE

...she had not... BEDLAM

...not... FLOTSAM

...noticed before... BEDLAM

...before... FLOTSAM

...she tried... BEDLAM

...tried... ALICE

...tried... FLOTSAM

...tried the tiny silver key... BEDLAM

...lock... FLOTSAM

...and to her great delight... BEDLAM

...oh...! ALICE

...oh...! FLOTSAM

BEDLAM

...great delight it fitted!

ALICE

Even if my head would go through, it would be of very little use without my shoulders...

BEDLAM

...how she longed...

ALICE

...oh...

BEDLAM

...longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander...

FLOTSAM

...wander...

ALICE

...wander...

FLOTSAM

...wander...

ALICE

...wonder...

BEDLAM

...wander...

ALICE

...oh how I wish...

FLOTSAM

...I wish...

ALICE

...I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could...

FLOTSAM

...I could...

ALICE
...if only I knew how to begin...

BEDLAM
...Alice had begun to think that very few things were really impossible...

ALICE
...impossible...

BEDLAM
...she...

ALICE
...oh..!

BEDLAM
...found a little...

FLOTSAM
...found a...

BEDLAM
...a little bottle...

ALICE
...which certainly was not here before.

FLOTSAM
"DRINK ME!"

ALICE
I'll see whether it's marked Poison or not...

BEDLAM
...she had read several nice little stories about children...

FLOTSAM
...children...

BEDLAM
...children who had all manner of unpleasant things happen to them because they would not remember the simple rules...

...simple... FLOTSAM

...Poison... ALICE

...and she had never forgotten if you drink from a bottle marked Poison... BEDLAM

...Poison... ALICE

...it is almost certain to disagree with you sooner... BEDLAM

...or later... FLOTSAM

But this bottle was not marked "poison..." BEDLAM

...Alice drinks and shrinks...

...what a curious feeling! ALICE

She runs to the door, but has forgotten the key on the table top – which is, of course, now too high to reach...

...oh... ALICE

...alas... FLOTSAM

...poor Alice... BEDLAM

...alas... FLOTSAM

...poor Alice... BEDLAM

...poor Alice... FLOTSAM

...the poor little thing... BEDLAM

...poor Alice... FLOTSAM

...poor Alice... ALICE

...little thing, she sat down and cried... BEDLAM

...alas... ALICE

...*silence, but for the sound of her crying.*

...*Finally...*

...come, there's no use in carrying on like that... ALICE

...this curious... BEDLAM

...curious... FLOTSAM

...curious child was very fond of pretending... BEDLAM

...very fond of... FLOTSAM

...pretending to be two people... BEDLAM

...alas... FLOTSAM

ALICE

...no use in crying like that! I advise you to leave off this very minute!

BEDLAM

She generally gave herself very sensible advice...

ALICE

...this minute...

FLOTSAM

...this minute...

BEDLAM

...though she very seldom followed it...

ALICE

...you ought to be ashamed of yourself...

BEDLAM

...she might well say this...

ALICE

...of yourself, a great girl like you to go on crying in this manner! Stop this moment. Come now, Alice, be reasonable. There's certainly no need for you to be going on in this way - if you don't cease and desist this instant, why, I'll box your ears...

BEDLAM

...but she would not listen to herself and went on all the same, shedding gallons of tears.

A cake goes spinning by like a tire, only twice as large.

FLOTSAM

"EAT ME!"

ALICE

Oh!

FLOTSAM

"EAT ME!"

ALICE

If it makes me grow larger, I can reach the key, if it makes me grow smaller I can creep under the door . . . either way I'll get through, and I don't care which happens.

She catches the cake and eats, growing.

ALICE

Oh!

The pool of tears is rather shallow for her now, and she walks about a bit, splashing over to the door . . . which is tinier than ever.

The White Rabbit goes pattering by.

RABBIT

Oh, oh, oh, oh, the Duh-duh-duchess, the Duh-duh-duchess! Oh wo'n't she buh-buh-be suh-suh-suh-suh-savage if, if, if, if, if, if, if, if, I've kuh-kuh-kuh-kuh-kept her wuh-wuh-wuh-wuh-waiting!

FLOTSAM

The White Rabbit!

ALICE

If you please, sir...

RABBIT

...aah!

He hops off, leaving behind a rabbit-sized set of gloves and a fan.

Alice picks them up.

ALICE

Dear, dear. How queer everything is today...

ECHO

...today...

ALICE

...and yesterday things went on as usual, I wonder...

ECHO

...wonder...

BEDLAM

...wonder...

ALICE

...I wonder if I've been changed in the night..?

FLOTSAM

...night...

ALICE

...let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning?
I wonder..?

ECHO

...wonder...

ALICE

...I almost think I can remember feeling a little bit
different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is
– who in the world am I? Ah that's the great puzzle...

ECHO

...puzzle...

ALICE

...how puzzling it all is. I'll try to see if I know all
the things I used to know – back when I used to be me. Let
me see . . . four times five is twelve, and four times six
is thirteen, and four times seven is . . . oh dear! I shall
never get to twenty at that rate. However, arithmetic is
so tiresome. I'll try geography. London is the capital of
Paris and Paris is the capital of Rome and Rome is, no no no
– that's all wrong, I'm certain. I must not be . . . why, I
must be changed. How dreadful. I've made up my mind about it
– if I'm not myself any longer...

ECHO

...longer...

ALICE

...I'll stay down here...

ECHO

...down here...

ALICE

...and it'll be no use their putting their heads down and saying "Come up again dear!" I shall only look up and say "Who am I, then..?"

ECHO

...who am I, then..?

ALICE

"...tell me that first, and then – if I like being that person – I'll come up. If not, I'll stay down here until I'm somebody else. But . . . oh dear! I do wish they would put their heads down! I am so very tired of being all alone here...

ECHO

...all alone...

ALICE

...things are worse than ever, and I declare it's too bad, that it is!

She begins to cry again.

Suddenly – SPLASH – she finds herself in a deep pool of her own tears.

ALICE

I wish I hadn't cried so much. I shall be punished for it now, I suppose, by being drowned in my own tears. That will be a queer thing; however, everything is queer today.

A small Mouse goes paddling by.

ALICE

Would it be of any use to speak to this mouse? No harm in trying. O mouse!

The Mouse stops and looks at her, blinking.

Pause.

The Mouse, after a moment, shrugs and swims away.

ALICE

Oh dear. No one seems to like me down here. Now Alice, you daren't cry again – there's enough water as it is.

The White Rabbit passes by – perhaps in a rowboat, perhaps on stilts.

RABBIT

The Duh-duh-duh-duchess! The Duchess! Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, my duh-duh-duh-dear puh-puh-puh-paws. Oh muh-muh-muh-my fuh-fuh-fur and, and wuh-wuh-wuh-whiskers.

In his haste, The White Rabbit thoroughly ignores Alice.

RABBIT

She'll guh-get muh-muh-me ex-ex-ex-ex-ex-ex-ex-executed, as sure as cuh-cuh-cuh-cuh-cats are, are, are, are cuh-cats. I wuh-wuh-wuh-wuh-wonder...

FLOTSAM

...I wonder...

ALICE

...I wonder...

RABBIT

...wuh-wuh-wuh-where could I-I-I-I could I huh-huh-huh-huh-have duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-dropped, dropped them, them, them, dropped them, I wuh-wuh-wonder...

ALICE

...if you please, sir!

RABBIT

Aah!

He starts, stares at her, squints, rubs his eyes, takes a large pair of spectacles out of his pocket, inspects her carefully, nods to himself, and puts them away.

RABBIT

Wuh-wuh-wuh-why, Muh-muh-muh-mary Ann!

ALICE

Then I'm not myself...

RABBIT

...pay attention! Now, Mary Ann, what are you doing out here? Run home this minute and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan.

ALICE

But, I'm not...

RABBIT

...no excuses..!

ALICE

...but I...

RABBIT

...and no delays..!

ALICE

...but...

RABBIT

...no time for it..!

ALICE

...but...

RABBIT

...no time for that either..!

ALICE

...please...

RABBIT

...quick, be off, be gone!

He leaves.

ALICE

I must look a sight. How queer it seems to be running errands for a Rabbit. I should be going now, I expect he'll be needing his...

FLOTSAM

...tiny...

BEDLAM

...tiny...

FLOTSAM

...gloves...

BEDLAM

...tiny...

ALICE

...tiny gloves and fan. Oh! Oh, my! Sir . . . sir . . .
sir...

...she splashes after him, but he is gone.

ALICE

Oh dear. Oh..!

...she slaps her hand against the water in consternation and a terrific wave catches her up and tosses her, sprawling, on a patch of dry land somewhere in the next scene.

Act I: Alice Underground
Scene Three: Advice from a
Caterpillar

Alice gasps beneath a mushroom, soaking wet.

She fans herself as she talks.

And as she fans, she shrinks.

ALICE

I can do no more, whatever happens. What will become of me?
It was much pleasanter at home, where one wasn't getting
ordered about by rabbits and the like. I almost wish...

FLOTSAM

...almost wish...

ALICE

...wish I hadn't fallen down that rabbit hole – and yet...

FLOTSAM

...and yet...

ALICE

...It's rather curious, you know, this sort of life.

*She stops and gasps, now tiny, and throws the
fan and gloves away.*

ALICE

I wonder...

FLOTSAM

...I wonder...

ALICE

...what can have happened to me? When I used to read fairy
tales...

BEDLAM

...tales...

ALICE

...fairy...

FLOTSAM

...when...

ALICE

...when I used to read fairy tales I fancied that kind of thing never happened...

BEDLAM

...that kind...

FLOTSAM

...kind of thing never happened...

BEDLAM

...never...

ALICE

...never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one. There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought. I wonder...

FLOTSAM

...I wonder...

ALICE

...I wonder how it ends. Oh, how wretched it is to be a fairy tale – and to not know the ending. And of course, I'm not myself, so it isn't even about me.

The Caterpillar props itself up on top of the mushroom behind her.

CATERPILLAR

You? Who are you?

With a start, Alice spins to face it.

ALICE

Aaah!

The Caterpillar yawns.

ALICE

I . . . I hardly know sir, just at present, at least . . . I know who I was...

CATERPILLAR

...do you?

ALICE

Who I was when I got up this morning, but I think...

CATERPILLAR

...do you?

ALICE

I think I must have changed several times since then.

CATERPILLAR

What do you mean by all of that? Explain yourself!

ALICE

Well . . . I, I can't explain myself, I'm afraid...

CATERPILLAR

...are you? Why?

ALICE

Because I'm not myself, you see?

CATERPILLAR

I don't see.

ALICE

I'm afraid...

CATERPILLAR

...you are? What of?

ALICE

You see sir, I can't...

CATERPILLAR

...can't you? Why not?

ALICE

I can't put it more clearly for I don't...

CATERPILLAR

...you don't? How so?

ALICE

I don't understand it myself to begin with. And changing is all so very confusing.

CATERPILLAR

It isn't.

ALICE

Well, perhaps you haven't found it to be so...

CATERPILLAR

...I haven't and it isn't...

ALICE

...yet, but when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will someday, you know...

CATERPILLAR

...I know...

ALICE

...and then after that into a butterfly, I should think...

CATERPILLAR

...yes, I will and yes you should...

ALICE

...well, I should think you'll find it a little queer, wo'n't you?

CATERPILLAR

Not a bit.

ALICE

Well, perhaps your feelings about it may be a little different...

CATERPILLAR

...they are...

ALICE

...all I know is...

CATERPILLAR

...is what?

ALICE

It would feel very curious to me.

CATERPILLAR

To you? Who are you?

ALICE

I think...

CATERPILLAR

...oh you do, do you?

ALICE

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

CATERPILLAR

Me? Tell? You? Who are you?

ALICE

Oh..!

...she turns to go.

CATERPILLAR

Come back! I've something important to say!

Alice returns reluctantly, waiting.

Long pause.

ALICE

Yes?

CATERPILLAR

Keep your temper.

Long pause.

ALICE

Is that it?

CATERPILLAR

No.

Pause.

CATERPILLAR

So, you think you've changed, do you?

ALICE

I'm afraid...

CATERPILLAR

...are you?

ALICE

I'm afraid I am, sir. I can't remember things as I used.

CATERPILLAR

Things? What sort of things?

ALICE

I can't remember my . . . my...

CATERPILLAR

...your..?

ALICE

...my lessons and . . . well, all sorts of things.

CATERPILLAR

Recite "How doth the little Crocodile" Poetry will always find you out. Sooner or later. In the end.

ALICE

How doth the grinning Cheshire Cat
Improve his handsome smile,
And combs his whiskers
Just like that,
With claws that need no file.
How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little children in
With gently smiling jaws.

CATERPILLAR

That was not said right.

ALICE

Not quite right, I'm afraid...

CATERPILLAR

...are you? Of what?

ALICE

Some of the words have got altered.

CATERPILLAR

It is wrong from beginning to end.

ALICE

I suppose...

CATERPILLAR

...do you? Who is it you want to be?

ALICE

Oh, I'm not particular...

CATERPILLAR

...aren't you?

ALICE

Only, one doesn't like changing so often, you know.

CATERPILLAR

I don't know. Are you content now?

ALICE

Well, I should like to find my way home, if you wouldn't mind...

CATERPILLAR

...I wouldn't.

ALICE

After all, this is such a very wretched place to be.

CATERPILLAR

It is a very good place indeed!

ALICE

But, but, but...

CATERPILLAR

...but, but, but...

ALICE

...but, I'm not used to it.

CATERPILLAR

You'll get used to it. Eventually. In time.

ALICE

Perhaps. It's just...

CATERPILLAR

...is it?

ALICE

Just the fact of changing size so often.

CATERPILLAR

What do you mean?

ALICE

Well...

CATERPILLAR

...what size do you want to be?

ALICE

Oh, I'm not particular as to size...

CATERPILLAR

...aren't you?

ALICE

Only one doesn't like changing so often, you know.

CATERPILLAR

I don't know. What size would you like to be?

ALICE

Well...

CATERPILLAR

...are you content now?

ALICE
Well, I should...

CATERPILLAR
...should you?

ALICE
I should like to be a little larger, sir, if you please...

CATERPILLAR
...I don't...

ALICE
...three inches is such a terribly wretched height to be.

CATERPILLAR
It is a very good height indeed!

ALICE
But I'm not...

CATERPILLAR
...aren't you?

ALICE
I'm not used to it!

CATERPILLAR
You get used to it. Eventually. In time.

Alice turns to go.

CATERPILLAR
Come back! I've something important to say!

Long pause.

ALICE
Yes?

CATERPILLAR
Keep your temper.

ALICE
Why?

CATERPILLAR

If you don't keep your temper, do you realize what you'll be?

ALICE

Why . . . angry, I suppose.

CATERPILLAR

Angry? Hah! You'll . . . be . . . mad!

ALICE

Mad?

CATERPILLAR

Mad. You'll be mad. And then you've no hope of leaving here. Not ever.

After a moment he packs it in and crawls off, muttering...

CATERPILLAR

...one side shrinks...

ALICE

...what..?

CATERPILLAR

...the other doesn't...

ALICE

...pardon? One side of what? Shrinks what?

CATERPILLAR

The mushroom of course, of course.

ALICE

The . . . mushroom?

CATERPILLAR

Of course...

...and it is gone.

Alice approaches the mushroom and, placing her two hands on each side, manages to snap a piece off of each.

She examines them.

ALICE

One side...

FLOTSAM

...one side...

BEDLAM

...one side...

...she takes a bite from one and grows...

ALICE

...oh...!

...she takes a bite from the other and shrinks...

ALICE

...oh my...!

...nibbling between the two, she gradually adjusts her height until she is satisfied.

Tossing the pieces away, she begins walking again.

After awhile, she stops just on this side of the next scene where a small cottage awaits her.

There is a terrific racket coming from within.

She squares her shoulders and continues on.

Act One: Alice Underground
Scene Four: Pig and Pepper

Alice approaches the cottage.

A decidedly fishy footman runs out from behind her and knocks on the door. After a moment, a somewhat froggy footman answers.

They face each other, bowing low.

FISH

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

FROG

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

They bow again and fall over.

After a moment, the Fish Footman scrambles up and runs off.

The Frog Footman lies down upon the stoop, staring up at the sky.

Alice approaches slowly and knocks on the door.

Pause.

FROG

There's no sort of use at all in your knocking.

ALICE

Why not?

FROG

Well, that's for two simple reasons. Firstly, because I'm on the same bleedin' side of the door as you are. Secondly, b'cause they're making such a bleedin' racket inside, I couldn't possibly've a'heard you anywhat bleedin' way. If'n I was within, I mean to say.

ALICE

Please then, how am I to get in?

FROG

Well, there might be some bleedin' sense in your knocking, if'n we had the door b'tween us, like. F'rinstance, if'n you were inside, you might knock, and I could let you out.

ALICE

But . . . then . . . how am I to get in?

Silence.

FROG

I shall lie here 'till t'morrow . . . or the next bleedin' day, p'raps.

ALICE

How am I to get in?

FROG

Are you meant t'get in at all? That's the first bleedin' question on my little mind, y'see?

Pause.

FROG

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

ALICE

But what am I to do?

FROG

Anything y'bleedin' like, lassie. S'not my bleedin' house, is it?

Alice storms past him and into the house and into a kitchen dark with pepper and flying object being thrown by The Cook and The Duchess.

The Duchess has a bit of a disadvantage, she only has one hand free – the other is holding what appears to be a baby who is puffing and screaming like a steam engine.

The racket is, with the crying and screaming and pots banging, terrific.

The Cheshire Cat is sitting on the hearth – grinning in his sleep.

And everyone, save The Cat, is sneezing.

ALICE

Please, would you tell me why your cat grins like that?

DUCHESS

It's a Cheshire Cat and that's why. Pig!

ALICE

I beg your pardon?

The Duchess bounces the screaming bundle of what appears to be baby on her knee.

DUCHESS

Pig. Pig. Pig. Pig. Pig.

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 any that do.

DUCHESS

You don't know much, and that's a fact. Pig!

The battle between The Cook and The Duchess grows somewhat thicker.

ALICE

Oh, please. Mind what you are doing.

DUCHESS

If everybody minded their own business, the world would go 'round a great deal faster than it does, and that's a fact.

ALICE

Which would not be an advantage.

DUCHESS

It most certainly would.

ALICE

It most certainly would not, just think...

DUCHESS

...I will if you will...

*...for this, Alice heaves a pot at her,
continuing her lesson.*

ALICE

Think of 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

...speaking of axes, off with her head!

ALICE

I beg your pardon?

DUCHESS

It isn't respectable to beg.

ALICE

What I meant to say was...

DUCHESS

...then why didn't you?

ALICE

If you please...

DUCHESS

...oh don't bother me, I could never abide children.

*She sings to the bundle of what appears to be
baby.*

DUCHESS

Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes,
He only does it to annoy
Because he knows it teases.

DUCHESS, COOK, AND BABY

Wow! Wow! Wow!

DUCHESS

I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes,
For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases.

DUCHESS, COOK, AND BABY

Wow! Wow! Wow!

ALICE

Oh, the poor dear.

DUCHESS

Here!

*She flings the bundle of what appears to be
baby at her and Alice barely manages to catch
it.*

ALICE

Oh!

DUCHESS

Since you've such a fancy for pigs, you may nurse the thing
a bit if you like. I must go and get ready to play croquet
with the Queen.

*With one final throw at the cook she leaves,
knocking her cold.*

ALICE

If I don't take this child away with me, they're sure to
kill it in a day or two. Wouldn't it be murder to leave it
behind?

BABY

Oink

ALICE

Don't grunt. That's not a proper way of expressing yourself.

BABY

Oink

ALICE

If you're going to turn into a pig, my dear, I'll have nothing more to do with you. Mind you mind, now.

BABY

Oink Oink Oink Oink Oink...

...and it is, in fact, a pig and not a baby at all – and all the parents in the audience breathe a sigh of relief and exchange sidelong glances.

ALICE

Now what am I to do with this creature when I get home?

BABY

Oink Oink Oink Oink Oink...

ALICE

...oh my...!

...she sets it down in revulsion and it scampers off, free at last...

BABY

...Oink Oink Oink Oink Oink Oink...

Alice watches it go.

ALICE

If it had grown up, it would have been a dreadfully ugly child – but it makes a rather handsome pig, I think.

The Cheshire Cat yawns expansively and grins even more so, watching her, flexing his claws and flicking his tail.

ALICE

Ah, ah . . . Cheshire Puss . . . would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?

CAT

Mwr. 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 go...

ALICE

...so long as I get somewhere.

CAT

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

ALICE

What sort of people live around here?

CAT

In that direction lives a Hatter, and in that direction lives a March Hare. Visit either you please - they're both mad.

ALICE

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

CAT

Mwr. Oh, you can't help that. We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.

ALICE

How do you know I'm mad?

CAT

You must be or you wouldn't be here.

ALICE

How do you know that you're mad?

CAT

Mwr, well . . . a dog's not mad, you follow?

ALICE

I suppose so.

CAT

Well then. You see, a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased . . . isn't that proper?

ALICE

Yes.

CAT

Well, I growl when I'm pleased and wag my tail when I'm angry.

ALICE

Yes.

CAT

Therefore . . . I'm mad!

ALICE

I call it "purring" not growling.

CAT

Mwr. Well, call it what you like.

ALICE

And that's what makes you mad?

CAT

I think I'd know if I were, don't you?

ALICE

But isn't that fact that you admit you're mad seem to indicate that precisely the opposite is...

CAT

...mwr, perhaps, I don't know. I'm too mad to tell.

ALICE

But...

CAT

...do you play croquet with the Queen today?

ALICE

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

CAT

You'll see me there.

The Cheshire Cat vanishes.

Alice looks about.

She makes off to go, but The Cat has appeared again in her path.

ALICE

Oh my.

CAT

By the by, whatever became of the baby? I'd nearly forgotten to ask.

ALICE

It wasn't a baby. It was a pig.

CAT

Mwr. I thought it might be. Something in the nose.

The Cheshire Cat vanishes again.

Alice waits for a moment, then continues on.

ALICE

Well I've seen hatters before, so the March Hare will be much the most interesting, and perhaps as this is May he wo'n't be raving mad – at least, not so mad as if it was March.

She starts off in that direction when The Cheshire Cat appears again, startling her.

ALICE

Oh my goodness!

CAT

Mwr. Sorry, did you say pig, or fig?

I said pig.

ALICE

Sorry?

CAT

Pig!

ALICE

Needn't shout.

CAT

Well, you needn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly, you make one quite . . . giddy.

ALICE

Mwr. Apologies all around, then.

CAT

Very slowly he begins to fade, tail first, up to his grin left floating there.

Well I've often seen a cat without a grin, but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life.

ALICE

She goes on, stopping short of The March Hare's home. Just around the back, some sort of terrific riot is taking place.

Suppose it should be raving mad, after all? I almost wish I'd gone to see the Hatter instead.

ALICE

Yet she continues on, cautiously, into the next scene.

Act One: Alice Underground
Scene Five: A Mad Tea Party

Alice comes to a long table set with tea service for a dozen or more.

All crowded down at one end are: The Mad Hatter, The March Hare, and a Dormouse.

She approaches.

ALL
No room! No room!

ALICE
There's plenty of room.

HARE
Have some wine?

ALICE
Why yes, thank you.

HARE
Help yourself.

ALICE
I . . . I don't see any wine.

HARE
Well, there isn't any.

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

HARE
Well, it wasn't very civil of you to sit down at my table without an invitation, now was it?

ALICE
I didn't know it was your table.

HARE
Well now whose bloody table would it be?

ALICE

It's laid for a great deal more than three.

HATTER

Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE

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

HARE

Ha!

HATTER

Why is a raven like a writing desk?

They all look to her.

ALICE

Oh, I'm sorry . . . a riddle?

HATTER

Mm, a riddle - yes.

ALICE

Oh, I believe I can guess that.

HARE

Do you mean to say . . . that you can . . . find out . . . the answer . . . to . . . it?

ALICE

Exactly so.

HARE

Well now, why didn't you just say so?

ALICE

But, I did. I mean, I meant to.

HARE

Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE

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

HATTER
Ut! Ut! Ut! Not a bit of it.

HARE
No.

HATTER
Definitely not.

DORMOUSE
No-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o...

*...the other two hit The Dormouse until he goes
back to sleep.*

HATTER
You might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the
same as "I eat what I see."

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

HATTER
Very different.

HARE
Yes.

HATTER
Very.

DORMOUSE
Yes.

HARE
And we'd know.

HATTER
What day of the month is it?

ALICE
It's . . . the fourth.

HATTER

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

HARE

It was the best.

ALICE

The best what?

HARE

The best butter, of course. What do you use?

ALICE

In my..?

HATTER

...two days wrong, tch tch.

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?

ALICE

Of course not...

HARE

...no, it doesn't...

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...

HATTER

...guessed the riddle yet?

HARE
Has she?

HATTER
Has she?

HARE
Have you?

DORMOUSE
Have you, have you, have you, have you..?

The other two smother him until he stops.

HATTER
Mm?

ALICE
No. Give up.

HATTER
Mm.

HARE
Mm.

Silence.

ALICE
Well, what is the answer?

HATTER
Haven't the slightest.

HARE
Mm. Nor I.

HATTER
You don't?

HARE
No.

HATTER
Mm.

HARE

Mm. Ah.

ALICE

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

HATTER

If you...

HARE

...ha...!

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.

HARE

Mm.

HATTER

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

HARE

Mm. Ah. No. I dare say she didn't.

ALICE

Perhaps not, but I know how to beat time when I play music.

HATTER

Ah. That accounts for it. He wo'n't stand beating. Now, if you had only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you like with the clock. For instance...

HARE

...mm, for instance...

HATTER

...for instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just in time for school - you'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling. Half past one, time for dinner!

HARE

I only wish it was.

ALICE

That would be grand, certainly, but then . . . I shouldn't be hungry for it, you know, so soon after breakfast.

HATTER

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

HARE

Mm. Yes. Ah.

ALICE

Is that the way you manage?

HATTER

No indeed. Not I.

HARE

Mm. No. No indeed.

HATTER

We quarreled last March — just before he went mad, you know...

HARE

...mm, yes, ah, quite...

HATTER

...we quarreled, Time and I, and ever since then he wo'n't do a thing I ask.

HARE

No. Mm.

HATTER

It's always six o'clock, now.

ALICE

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

HARE

Mm.

HATTER

Yes, that's it. It's always teatime now...

HARE

...mm, teatime, yes...

HATTER

...and we've no time to wash the things betweenwhiles.

ALICE

Then you keep moving round, I suppose?

HATTER

Exactly...

HARE

...exactly, precisely, mm...

HATTER

...as things get used up.

HARE

Ah. Mm. Quite. Ah. Mm. Yes. Mm. Ah. Mm.

ALICE

Do please shut up. But when you've come to the beginning again..?

The March Hare bursts into tears.

HATTER

Look what you've done.

ALICE

I'm...

HATTER

...there, there, there, old fellow. She didn't mean it, did you?

ALICE

I most certainly did.

The March Hare's wails increase.

HATTER

Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

ALICE

Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

HATTER

You needn't be so cruel.

ALICE

Nobody asked your opinion.

HATTER

Who's making personal remarks now?

Finally, The Dormouse wakes up.

DORMOUSE

Mmmm-ahhh! What's the rumpus?

HATTER

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

*Quietly and solemnly they do so. They settle,
and once again chaos ensues.*

HATTER

Have some more tea.

ALICE

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

HATTER

You mean, you can't have less. It's very easy to have more than nothing.

ALICE

Really now, if you ask my opinion...

HATTER

...we didn't.

ALICE

I simply don't think...

HATTER

...then you shouldn't speak.

Pause.

Alice is so offended, she storms off.

ALICE

At any rate, I'll never go there again! It's the stupidest party I ever was at in all my life! It's dreadful the way every one argues here, they're all quite terribly rude.

In a huff – the most favored mode of transportation by sophisticated young ladies – she not only storms her way out of the scene, but the entire first act as well.

Act Two: The Trial
Scene One: The Queen's Croquet

Alice, walking through a beautiful garden.

There are three cards, gardeners, working close by, arguing.

TWO OF HEARTS

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

FIVE OF HEARTS

I wasn't.

TWO OF HEARTS

You were.

FIVE OF HEARTS

Well, I couldn't help it. Seven joggled my elbow.

SEVEN OF HEARTS

I didn't.

FIVE OF HEARTS

You did.

SEVEN OF HEARTS

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

FIVE OF HEARTS

I don't.

SEVEN AND TWO OF HEARTS

You do.

FIVE OF HEARTS

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

SEVEN OF HEARTS

You didn't.

I did. FIVE OF HEARTS

She didn't. SEVEN OF HEARTS

She did. FIVE OF HEARTS

She did. TWO OF HEARTS

I don't. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Silence.

The other two whistle softly.

I don't. SEVEN OF HEARTS

No. TWO OF HEARTS

No. But that's what she said. FIVE OF HEARTS

What for? TWO OF HEARTS

None of your business, Two. SEVEN OF HEARTS

She said it was because he... FIVE OF HEARTS

...I never did... SEVEN OF HEARTS

...oh, that's what I heard as well. TWO OF HEARTS

Yes. I'd watch it from now on, if I were you. FIVE OF HEARTS

TWO OF HEARTS

That's what she said.

SEVEN OF HEARTS

Well of all the unjust things...

ALICE

...excuse me?

CARDENERS

Aah!

*They throw themselves flat on the ground,
shivering.*

ALICE

Excuse me.

Five looks up.

FIVE OF HEARTS

S'alright men.

They slowly rise.

TWO OF HEARTS

Earth coming along nicely.

SEVEN OF HEARTS

Indeed.

FIVE OF HEARTS

Lovely bit of loam, that.

TWO OF HEARTS

Yes, it is nice.

FIVE OF HEARTS

Yes.

SEVEN OF HEARTS

Ah! Sorry, miss – didn't see you there. Just, erm, checking the seedlings and . . . things.

Seedlings. TWO OF HEARTS

Yes. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Now, what can we do for you? FIVE OF HEARTS

ALICE
Would you tell me, please, why you are painting those roses?

Well, they... SEVEN OF HEARTS

...shh! TWO AND FIVE OF HEARTS

Pause.

What roses? FIVE OF HEARTS

Those right there. ALICE

Roses, roses . . . you see any roses, Two? FIVE OF HEARTS

Roses? Ha, no no. Seven? TWO OF HEARTS

Wha' ? SEVEN OF HEARTS

See any roses hereabouts? FIVE OF HEARTS

Silence.

Five and Two sweat it out a bit.

Ahhh . . . no. No no. No no no. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Right. So there you are. FIVE OF HEARTS

There you are. TWO OF HEARTS

Isn't this a rose? ALICE

That? Oh, no no no. FIVE OF HEARTS

No. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Not a bit of it. TWO OF HEARTS

A simple mistake miss, but understandable. FIVE OF HEARTS

Mm. A rose, no no no. TWO OF HEARTS

No. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Well, what then? ALICE

Erm... TWO OF HEARTS

...well, obviously it's a, uh... FIVE OF HEARTS

...uh... TWO OF HEARTS

...it's a . . . daisy? FIVE OF HEARTS

A daisy? ALICE

Tigerlily? Mum? TWO OF HEARTS

Poppy? FIVE OF HEARTS

That's it, poppy. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Yes. A poppy. TWO OF HEARTS

I don't... ALICE

...right, well then, erm, ah . . . it's a rose. FIVE OF HEARTS

Yes. TWO OF HEARTS

But why are you painting them? ALICE

We're not. FIVE OF HEARTS

No. TWO OF HEARTS

No. SEVEN OF HEARTS

Alice picks up one of the brushes, pointedly.

Well, oh painting . . . yes. Yes. We are painting, as such, yes. FIVE OF HEARTS

Why? ALICE

Why. Well, the fact is . . . y'see miss, this here ought to have been a red rose tree... FIVE OF HEARTS

TWO OF HEARTS

...a red one...

FIVE OF HEARTS

...yes, and Seven put a white one here by mistake...

SEVEN OF HEARTS

...didn't...

TWO OF HEARTS

...you did...

FIVE OF HEARTS

...well, that's not the important part, really.

SEVEN OF HEARTS

It is.

FIVE OF HEARTS

Well anyhow, someone...

SEVEN OF HEARTS

...someone, not me, someone...

FIVE OF HEARTS

...someone put a – you see miss, this should have been a red rose bush, and if the Queen was to find out we should all have our heads chopped off, you see. So you see miss, we're all doing our best...

TWO OF HEARTS

...we really are...

SEVEN OF HEARTS

...especially me...

FIVE OF HEARTS

...we're doing our best, afore she comes to . . . oh my goodness...

TWO OF HEARTS

...oh my goodness...

SEVEN OF HEARTS

...oh my goodness...

*...they throw themselves flat on the ground
as the King and Queen of Hearts enter in
procession.*

QUEEN

Knave, who is this?

The Knave of Hearts smiles silently, bowing.

QUEEN

Cretin. What is your name, sweet child?

ALICE

My name is Alice, so please your Majesty.

QUEEN

And who are these?

ALICE

How should I know? It's no business of mine.

The court gasps.

QUEEN

Off with her head, off with her..!

ALICE

...nonsense!

The court gasps.

KING

Consider my dear, she is only a child.

QUEEN

Get up!

*They all hop up and begin bowing left and
right.*

QUEEN

Leave off with that, you make me dizzy.

She turns and examines the evidence before her.

QUEEN

What's all this, then?

FIVE OF HEARTS

May it please your Majesty...

QUEEN

...it doesn't...

TWO OF HEARTS

...you see, Y'Majesty we were just...

SEVEN OF HEARTS

...they did it...

QUEEN

...I see.

She takes a deep breath and...

QUEEN

...off with their heads, off with their heads..!

...and so the procession moves on.

The Cardeners run and hide behind Alice.

ALICE

You sha'n't be beheaded.

She places them in a pot like flowers.

*The Executioner – The Ace of Spades,
incidentally – looks about for a moment.*

QUEEN

Are their heads off?

ACE OF SPADES

Their heads are gone, if it please your Majesty.

QUEEN

That's right!

The Ace follows after the procession.

QUEEN

Can you play croquet?

Long pause.

Everyone looks at Alice.

ALICE

Yes!

QUEEN

Come on, then!

ALICE

Alright!

The White Rabbit steals forward out of the crowd.

RABBIT

It's a vuh-vuh-vuh-very fuh-fine duh-day.

ALICE

Very. Where's the Duchess?

RABBIT

Hush, hush.

ALICE

What for?

RABBIT

She's un-un-under, under s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s...

...he hits himself in the head...

RABBIT

...sentence – I didn't think I was going to get that one out – she's un-un-under sentence of ex-ex-ex-ex-ex-execution.

ALICE

What for?

RABBIT

Duh-duh-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

Ah. She buh-buh-buh-boxed the Queen's ears...

...Alice laughs.

RABBIT

Hush, oh, hush. the Queen wuh-wuh-wuh-will huh-hear you!

ALICE

What happened?

RABBIT

You s-s-s-see, she cuh-cuh-cuh-came rah-rah-rather luh-late and the Queen s-s-s-said...

...but The Queen has returned, shouting.

QUEEN

Get to your places!

The game begins, full of utter madness and confusion . . . and everyone but Alice is cheating.

After awhile The Cheshire Cat begins to appear, smile first

CAT

Mwr.

ALICE

Oh!

CAT

Sorry. How are you getting on?

ALICE

I don't think they play at all fairly, and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear one's self speak – and they don't seem to have any rules in particular. At least, if there are nobody attends to them.

CAT

How do you like the Queen?

ALICE

Not at all. She's, so...

CAT

...so...?

ALICE

...she's so extremely...

...she notices The Queen listening in...

ALICE

...so extremely likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game.

CAT

Mwr.

The Queen moves on, smiling.

The King saunters past, oozing regal benevolence from his very pores.

KING

Who are you talking to, dear child?

ALICE

It's a friend of mine, your Majesty – a Cheshire Cat. Allow me to introduce you.

KING

Um. Well. Rather. We don't like the look of it.

CAT

Mwr. Likewise.

KING

However, it may kiss our hand if it likes.

CAT

I'd rather not.

KING

Don't be impertinent.

CAT

Rrrrrmmmwrrr.

KING

And don't look at us like that.

ALICE

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

CAT

You mean, you don't remember where you read it or you don't remember where you were when you read it?

ALICE

No, I don't remember where it is.

CAT

The book? Lost it, did you?

ALICE

No, I mean...

KING

...well, at any rate, it must be removed. My dear, We wish you would have this cat removed.

QUEEN

Off with his head, off with his head..!

KING

...we shall fetch the executioner ourself.

A large crowd begins to gather – executions make for good theatre.

The Cheshire Cat sits and surveys all with a cheerful grin.

The Ace of Spades and The King arrive and get to work.

KING

This one here.

ACE

Hurm.

Long pause.

KING

What are you waiting for? You heard The Queen – off with his head!

ACE

Begging your pardon, your Majesty. I don't rightly see how's a fella can goes about cutting orf a head what's been already removed.

KING

What on earth are you saying?

ACE

Well sir, you can't cut orf a head unless'n there's a body somewhere's attached to it – to cut it orf from, that is. I've never had to do such a thing before, and I'm not going to begin at this time in me life.

The court gasps.

KING

My good man, anything that has a head can be beheaded. It's the nature of the thing!

The court applauds his reasoning; The King pleased, does a little bow for them

ACE

Well, guvner...

KING

...your majesty...

ACE

...call me Ace, all's I know is that it won't be my axe what's swinging 'gainst nonvisible type necks t'day.

KING

Don't talk nonsense.

ACE

What's nonsense? Cutting orf a head from an invisible body or not cutting orf a head from an invisible body?

QUEEN

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

The court gasps.

ALICE

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

QUEEN

She's in prison. Fetch her here.

A few soldiers run off.

Slowly The Cat begins to fade away.

The Duchess is brought out, but now there is no cat, and the court scrambles madly about, searching.

Taking Alice's arm, the Duchess sneaks her away into the next scene.

Act Two: The Trial
Scene Two: The Mock Turtle's Story

The Duchess and Alice, walking arm in arm.

DUCHESS

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

Alice does not answer.

DUCHESS

You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk.

Alice does not answer.

DUCHESS

I can't tell you what the moral of that is, but I shall remember in a bit.

ALICE

Perhaps it hasn't one.

DUCHESS

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

ALICE

I suppose so.

DUCHESS

Aye, aye.

ALICE

Things are going on rather better now with the game.

DUCHESS

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

ALICE

I once heard somebody say that it's done by people minding their own business.

DUCHESS

Ah, well . . . it means much the same thing, doesn't it? And the moral of that is "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."

ALICE

How found you are of finding morals in things.

DUCHESS

Oh aye, indeed. Morals are the tiny morsels of life that make more of it than it is. The frosting on the cake, the twinkle in the bat, the shell on the oyster, the grin on the cat – these are the tiny things that make life so very much more.

ALICE

Which is why they're called "more-als" I suppose?

DUCHESS

Precisely. Precisely. Without morals life isn't.

ALICE

Isn't what?

DUCHESS

Precisely, my dear. How clever you are.

They walk on in silence.

DUCHESS

I dare say you may be wondering why I don't put my arm around your waist.

ALICE

Well...

DUCHESS

...you see, the reason is I'm doubtful about the temper of your pretty little friend there. Shall I try the experiment?

ALICE

He might bite.

DUCHESS

Very true, flamingos and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is "Birds of a feather flock together."

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.

DUCHESS

Really?

ALICE

Mustard, I mean.

DUCHESS

You don't say!

ALICE

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 that what it might appear to others that what you were or had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise."

ALICE

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

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 is silent.

DUCHESS

Thinking again?

ALICE

I've a right to think.

DUCHESS

Just about as much right as pigs have to fly. And the mu-muh-muh-muh-muh...

...The Queen is standing, watching them.

DUCHESS

A fuh-fuh-fine day, your Majesty.

QUEEN

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

The Duchess is already gone.

QUEEN

Let's go on with the game, shall we?

They begin to walk and play.

QUEEN

Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?

ALICE

No, I don't even know what a Mock Turtle is.

QUEEN

Come on then, and he shall tell you his story.

*She leads Alice to a large Gryphon lying asleep
in the sun.*

QUEEN

Up! Lazy thing.

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh! Mmmmmrah! What . . . oh, your radiant Majesty! What is it that your loyal and humble servant, obedient in all things can supply you..?

QUEEN

...take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle, to hear his history. I must go and attend to some executions I have ordered.

GRYPHON

Mmmrahhahzchs. Indeed I shall, Oh flower of the garden, oh twinkling star of Heaven, oh rare and most beautiful pearl indeed I shall...

QUEEN

...see that you do, Gryphon.

She leaves.

GRYPHON

What fun.

ALICE

What fun?

GRYPHON

Why, The Queen. It's all her fancy.

ALICE

What is?

GRYPHON

All of it. They never execute nobody, you know.

ALICE

I see.

GRYPHON

I expect you do – you have eyes. And since I see you have feet as well, you'd best come along.

ALICE

But, if there's no danger from her..?

GRYPHON

...no danger? Who says? There are worse things than losing your head, you know. Besides, I haven't seen the Mock Turtle in a week of days. Come along, child.

Alice follows him.

GRYPHON

Coming to hear the Mock Turtle's sorrow, eh? Well, well, well. Lucky you. Lucky-lucky-lucky you.

ALICE

If you please, sir, what is his sorrow?

GRYPHON

His Sorrow? Hjkrrrh! It's all fancy, that. He hasn't got no sorrow to speak of, you know. Come on! Here he is.

They have found him, sitting on a large rock, sighing.

GRYPHON

This here young lady, she wants to know your history, she do.

MOCK TURTLE

Is this true?

ALICE

If you please.

MOCK TURTLE

Then I suppose I shall...

GRYPHON

...hjckrrrh, excuse me...

MOCK TURTLE

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

They do so.

MOCK TURTLE

Once . . . I was a real turtle.

Long silence.

Alice rises.

ALICE

Thank you sir, for the very interesting...

The Gryphon nudges her, whispering.

GRYPHON

...sit down, sit down. He's only just started.

ALICE

I beg your pardon.

Silence.

MOCK TURTLE

A real turtle. When we were little, we went to school in the sea.

ALICE

The sea?

MOCK TURTLE

Yes. The Master was an old turtle – but we always 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 stupid.

GRYPHON

You ought to be ashamed of yourself, asking such a simple question.

ALICE

I'm so very terribly sorry, pray continue.

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh!

MOCK TURTLE

Well...

GRYPHON

...drive on old fellow, don't be all day about it.

MOCK TURTLE

He taught us. Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you mayn't believe it...

ALICE

...I never said I didn't.

MOCK TURTLE

You did.

ALICE

No, I...

GRYPHON

...hold your tongue! Hjckrrh!

MOCK TURTLE

We had the best educations – in fact we went to school every day. I couldn't afford much...

GRYPHON

...nor I...

MOCK TURTLE

...just the regular courses.

ALICE

And what were those?

MOCK TURTLE

Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with. Then the different branches of Arithmetic: Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.

ALICE

Uglification?

MOCK TURTLE

Yes.

ALICE

What is that?

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh! Never heard of Uglifying?

ALICE

No.

GRYPHON

You know what to beautify is, I suppose?

ALICE

Of course, it means to make anything more . . . prettier?

GRYPHON

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

ALICE

What else had you to learn?

MOCK TURTLE

Well, there was Mystery, ancient and modern; Seaography, then Drawling — the Drawling master was an old eel, that used to teach us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.

ALICE

What was that like?

MOCK TURTLE

Well, I can't show you myself. Shell's too stiff. Perhaps the Gryphon could...

GRYPHON

...never learned it. Hadn't no time. I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, he was.

MOCK TURTLE

He taught us Laughing and Grief, they used to say.

GRYPHON

So he did, so he did.

MOCK TURTLE

I never went to him.

GRYPHON

No?

MOCK TURTLE

No. I sat in on a lesson once, though.

ALICE

Which one?

MOCK TURTLE

Which do you think?

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.

MOCK TURTLE

That's the reason they are called "lessons" . . . they lessen from day to day.

ALICE

Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?

MOCK TURTLE

Of course it was.

ALICE

What did you do on the twelfth day?

GRYPHON

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

The Mock Turtle beckons them closer into the next scene.

Act Two: The Trial
Scene Three: The Lobster Quadrille

The Mock Turtle continues.

MOCK TURTLE

You may not have lived much under the sea...

ALICE

...I haven't ever...

GRYPHON

...shhh..!

MOCK TURTLE

...and perhaps you were never even introduced to a lobster...

ALICE

...I once tasted - er, no, never

MOCK TURTLE

...so you can have no idea at all whatsoever of what a delightful thing a Lobster Quadrille is.

ALICE

No indeed.

MOCK TURTLE

No indeed.

Silence.

MOCK TURTLE

It's a dance.

ALICE

Is it?

GRYPHON

It is. First you form a line along the seashore...

MOCK TURTLE

...two lines! Seals, turtles, salmon, and so on. Then, once you've cleared the jellyfishes away...

GRYPHON

...that generally takes some time...

ALICE

...so I'd imagine...

MOCK TURTLE

...you advance twice...

GRYPHON

...each with a lobster as a partner...

MOCK TURTLE

...of course, of course. Advance twice, set to partners...

GRYPHON

...change lobsters, and retire in the same order.

MOCK TURTLE

Then, you know, you throw the...

GRYPHON

...the lobsters...!

MOCK TURTLE

...as far out to sea as you can...

GRYPHON

...swim after them...

MOCK TURTLE

...turn a somersault in the sea...

GRYPHON

...change lobsters again...

MOCK TURTLE

...back to land again, and – of course, this all is just the first figure.

They both catch their breath.

ALICE

It . . . it must be a jolly thing to see.

MOCK TURTLE

Would you like to see a little of it?

ALICE

Very much indeed.

MOCK TURTLE

Come! Let's try the first figure.

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh!

MOCK TURTLE

We can do it without lobsters, you know. Which shall begin?

GRYPHON

Oh, you begin. I've forgotten the words.

MOCK TURTLE

Very well.

They join "hands" and begin an odd, shuffling dance.

As they sing, Alice claps her hands, beating out the time.

MOCK TURTLE

"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 seashore,
will you come and join the dance?"

GRYPHON AND MOCK TURTLE

Will you, wo'n't you,
will you, wo'n't you,
will you join the dance?
Will you, wo'n't you,
will you, wo'n't you,
will you join the dance?

GRYPHON

"You really have no notion
how delightful it will be
when they take us up and throw us,
with the lobsters, out to sea!"

MOCK TURTLE

But the snail replied, "Too far, too far"
and gave a look askance.
Said he thanked the whiting kindly,
he would not join the dance.

GRYPHON AND MOCK TURTLE

Would not, could not,
would not, could not,
would not join the dance!
Would not, could not,
would not, could not,
would not join the dance!

GRYPHON

"What matters it how far we go?"
his scaly friend replied,
"There is another shore, you know,
upon the other side.
The farther off from England
the nearer is to France;
Then turn not pale, beloved snail,
but come and join the dance.

GRYPHON AND MOCK TURTLE

Will you, wo'n't you,
will you, wo'n't you,
will you join the dance?
Will you, wo'n't you,
will you, wo'n't you,
will you join the dance?

They finish with a flourish and a bow.

Alice applauds.

ALICE

Thank you very much.

GRYPHON AND MOCK TURTLE

You're very much welcome.

GRYPHON

Enjoyed it then, did you?

ALICE

It's a very . . . interesting dance to watch.

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh! Come! Let's hear some of your adventures.

MOCK TURTLE

Yes, let's.

ALICE

I could tell you my adventures – beginning from this morning, but it's no use going back to yesterday because I was a different person then.

MOCK TURTLE

Explain all that.

GRYPHON

No, no . . . the adventures first!

MOCK TURTLE

No, explain!

GRYPHON

Explanations take such a dreadful long time.

MOCK TURTLE

Very well.

ALICE

Well, I don't quite know where to start...

MOCK TURTLE

...start at the beginning and go on until you come to the end – then stop.

ALICE

Well, I was sitting...

GRYPHON

...where?

ALICE

On the...

MOCK TURTLE

...with who?

ALICE

My sister...

GRYPHON

...what's her name?

ALICE

Well, it's...

GRYPHON

...how long have you know her?

ALICE

What..?

MOCK TURTLE

...what is the use of repeating all this stuff if you don't explain it as you go along? It's by far the most confusing mess I've ever heard.

GRYPHON

Yes, I think you'd better leave off.

Silence.

GRYPHON

Would you like to see another figure of the dance?

ALICE

Well...

MOCK TURTLE

...or would you prefer a song?

ALICE

Oh, a song please.

GRYPHON

No accounting for tastes. Sing her "Turtle Soup", why don't you, old fellow?

The Mock Turtle sighs deeply and sings.

MOCK TURTLE

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 - oop!
Beau - ootiful Soo - oop!
Soo - oop of the e - e - evening,
beautiful, beautiful soup!

Long silence.

*Alice applauds, but The Mock Turtle holds up
one flipper, quieting her.*

GRYPHON

Second verse.

MOCK TURTLE

Beautiful soup!
Who cares for fish, game,
or any other dish?
Who would not give all else
for two pennyworth
only of beautiful soup?

MOCK TURTLE

Beau – ootiful Soo – oop!
Beau – ootiful Soo – oop!
Soo – oop of the e – e – evening,
beautiful, beauti – FUL SOUP!

Long pause.

ALICE

Now?

GRYPHON

Now. Chorus again! Chorus!

Alice applauds tentatively.

GRYPHON

Lovely! Bra-vo! Wasn't it something special?

ALICE

Oh, rather.

GRYPHON

More! Hjckrrh! More!

MOCK TURTLE

Oh, well . . . if you insist.

*He takes a deep breath, as if to begin, but
from far off come cries of "The trial's
beginning, the trial's beginning!"*

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh! Come on, the trial's begun!

ALICE

But...

GRYPHON

...quickly, hjckrrh, quickly!

MOCK TURTLE

But what about my song?

But... ALICE

...come on...! GRYPHON

...but who is on trial? ALICE

They run ahead into the next scene, leaving The Mock Turtle behind.

MOCK TURTLE
Beau - ootiful Soo - oop!
Beau - ootiful Soo - oop!
Soo - oop of the e - e - evening,
beautiful, beauti - FUL SOUP!

Long silence.

He looks around, but they have already gone ahead.

Act Two: The Trial
Scene Four: Who Stole The Tarts?

The courtroom, full of all sorts of amazing characters and animals – some we have met already and some we have not.

The King and Queen of Hearts, presiding.

A jury of peers.

The White Rabbit, court herald.

The Knave of Hearts, prisoner.

Tableau.

Then, the place bursts with activity – people run about chattering away like broken gramophones.

Into all of this, the Gryphon and Alice enter.

ALICE

What are they doing?

GRYPHON

Hjckrrh! They're putting down their names.

ALICE

Whatever for?

GRYPHON

So they won't forget them.

ALICE

Stupid things.

JURY

"Stoo – pid . . . things."

KING

Silence in the court! Herald..!

RABBIT

...if yuh-yuh-yuh-you puh-puh-please s-s-s-sire, my nuh-nuh-nuh-name isn't...

KING

...silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KING

Herald, read the accusation.

RABBIT

Y-y-y-yes, sire.

He draws a large scroll out of his vest, pops on his spectacles, and examines it.

RABBIT

"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."

JURY

"The Qu - een . . . of . . . He - arts..."

KING

...silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KING

Consider your verdict carefully, gentlemen...

RABBIT

...nuh-nuh-nuh-not yuh-yuh-yet, sire! There's a guh-guh-guh-great duh-deal muh-muh-m-m-m-more to come be-be-be-before that!

KING

Eh? Oh . . . heh, heh. Yes. Pray continue, herald.

RABBIT

Buh-buh-but muh-my nuh-nuh-nuh-name isn't...

KING

...call the first witness!

RABBIT

Fuh-fuh-fuh-fuh-fuh-fuh-fuh...

He stops to take a breath.

JURY

"Fuh-fuh-fuh..."

RABBIT

...fuh-first witness!

The Mad Hatter enters, teacup and bread in hand, with The March Hare and The Dormouse close behind.

KING

First witness!

HATTER

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.

HATTER

Yes, sire - but these things take time.

KING

When did you begin?

HATTER

Fourteenth of March I think it was, sire...

HARE

...fifteenth....

DORMOUSE

...sixteenth.

JURY

"...fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth..."

KING

...silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KING

Take off your hat.

HATTER

I can't.

KING

Contempt! Contempt! Guards!

JURY

"Con - tempt..."

RABBIT

...guards!

HATTER

I mean to say, your Majesty, I'm not wearing my hat.

The court regards him silently.

KING

Are you mad?

The court turns and regards The King silently.

KING

Well, you know what I mean.

HATTER

My lord...

KING

"...your Honor..."

HATTER
...my Honor, this hat is not mine.

KING
Stolen!

He turns to the jury.

KING
Make a note of that!

JURY
"Sto - len..."

HATTER
...my Honor...

KING
...your honor...

HATTER
...I - beg pardon?

KING
Your honor.

HATTER
What about it?

Long pause.

KING
Give your evidence.

HATTER
Well...

KING
...and don't be nervous, or I'll have you executed on the spot!

HATTER
Wuh-wuh-wuh-well, your muh-muh-Majesty...

KING

...give your evidence or I'll have you executed, whether you're nervous or not!

HATTER

I'm a poor man, your Majesty, and I hadn't but just begun my tea – not above a week or so ago...

KING

...it must have been very weak tea, eh? Heh. Heh. Heh.

The court is silent.

KING

It's a pun!

The court bursts into spontaneous applause.

KING

Go on!

HATTER

And what with the bread and butter getting so thin . . . and the twinkling of the tea...

KING

...the twinkling of what?

HATTER

Well, it began with tea.

KING

Of course twinkling begins with T! Do you take me for a idiot?

The court is silent.

HATTER

Sire?

KING

Go on!

HATTER

I'm a poor man, you Majesty . . . and most things twinkled along after that. Only, you may have heard, the March Hare said...

HARE

...I didn't!

HATTER

You did!

HARE

I deny it!

HATTER

He did!

HARE

Never!

HATTER

He said it twice!

HARE

That's a lie!

KING

He denies it. Leave out that part.

HATTER

Well . . . at any rate, the Dormouse said...

...he checks, The Dormouse appears to be asleep...

HATTER

...the Dormouse said...

DORMOUSE

...I deny it...

HATTER

...and after that I cut some more bread...

KING

...but what did the Dormouse say?

HARE

Ha!

KING

Silence in the court.

JURY

Sh!

HATTER

That I can't remember.

KING

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

HATTER

I'm a puh-puh-puh-poor man, your Majesty...

KING

...you're a very poor speaker. If that's all you know you may stand down.

HATTER

Stand . . . down? How does one do that?

KING

Guards..!

HATTER

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

KING

...guards!

The guards remove The Hatter.

QUEEN

While you're at it, just take his head off for him as well.

KING

Call the next witness!

Everyone begins sneezing as The Cook enters.

KING

Give your evidence!

COOK

Sha'n't!

KING

Call the next witness.

RABBIT

Buh-buh-buh-but your Majesty, you muh-muh-must cross examine this wuh-witness.

KING

Well, if I must, I must. You are a cook?

COOK

Sire!

KING

What are tarts made of, anyways?

COOK

Pepper, mostly...

DORMOUSE

...bread and butter...

KING

...silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KING

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

The White Rabbit removes a scroll of names and scans down it.

RABBIT

Alice!

ALICE

Here! Here I am!

Having somehow grown much larger during all of this, Alice is so tall that when she rises, it is the next scene.

Act Two: The Trial
Scene Five: Alice's Evidence

Alice comes forward.

KING

What do you know about this business?

ALICE

Nothing.

KING

Nothing whatever?

ALICE

Nothing whatever.

KING

Not even a little bit?

ALICE

Not even at all.

KING

Write that down, it's important.

JURY

"...noo - oothing at aaa - aall..."

RABBIT

...unimportant, your Majesty meant to say, of course.

KING

Unimportant . . . Important . . . unimportant . . .
important...

He begins to work it out in a note book.

The court buzzes with activity.

ALICE

But it doesn't mean anything.

KING

Silence in the court. Rule Number Forty-two: "All persons more than a mile high to leave the court."

Everyone looks at Alice.

ALICE

I'm not a mile high.

KING

You are.

QUEEN

Nearly two miles high.

ALICE

Oh, I am not.

QUEEN

She is.

KING

You are.

ALICE

Well, I sha'n't go, at any rate. Besides, that's not a regular rule – you invented it just now.

KING

I did not.

ALICE

You most certainly did.

KING

Didn't.

ALICE

Did.

KING

I didn't. Rule Number Forty-Two's the oldest one in the book.

ALICE

Then why isn't it Rule Number One?

KING

Consider your verdict, gentlemen.

RABBIT

There's muh-muh-muh-more evidence yuh-yuh-yet tuh-to come, sire!

KING

Oh?

The Rabbit digs out a piece of paper.

RABBIT

Thuh-thuh-this puh-paper has juh-juh-juh-juh-just been fuh-fuh-found.

QUEEN

What's in it?

RABBIT

It hasn't been opened yet, but it seems to buh-buh-buh-be a luh-letter.

KING

From whom?

QUEEN

To whom?

RABBIT

Fruh-fruh-from thu-the puh-prisoner, tuh-tuh-to somebody. Suh-suh-suh-somebody else.

KING

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

QUEEN

Whom is it addressed to?

RABBIT

It, it, it isn't duh-duh-directed at all, in fuh-fuh-fuh-fact, there's nuh-nothing written on thuh-the outside. And it isn't even a luh-ruh-ruh-letter after all . . . it's a suh-suh-suh-set of vuh-verses.

KING

Are they in the prisoner's handwriting?

RABBIT

Nuh-nuh-no, they're nuh-not.

JURY

Hmmmm.

Pause.

KING

The scoundrel! He must have forged somebody else's writing!

The jury cheers.

KING

Silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KNAVE

I didn't write it, and you can't prove I did.

KING

What?

RABBIT

Thuh-thuh-there's no nuh-name signed at the end.

JURY

Hmmmm.

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.

The jury cheers.

KING

Silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

QUEEN

That proves his guilt!

KING

Thank you dear.

ALICE

It proves nothing of the sort. You haven't even read them yet!

KING

Read them.

RABBIT

Whuh-whuh-where shu-shall I be-begin, your muh-muh-muh-Majesty?

KING

Start at the beginning and go on until you come to the end
– then stop.

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.
He sent them word I had not gone
(We know it to be true):
If she should push the matter on,
What would become of you?
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.
If I or she should chance to be
Involved in this affair,
He trusts to you to set them free,
Exactly as we were.

They jury applauds.

RABBIT

It's nuh-nuh-not fuh-finished.

KING

Continue.

RABBIT

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 likes them best,
For this must ever be
A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me."

The jury applauds.

KING

Silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KING

That's the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet.
So now, let the jury consider carefully...

ALICE

...bosh! If any one of them can explain it...

KING

...silence in the court!

JURY

Sh! Sh!

ALICE

I don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it!

JURY

"She . . . does - n't . . . bee - lieve there's..."

KING

...silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

KING

If there's no meaning in it, that save a world of trouble, you know, as we needn't try to find any – and yet, I don't know. I seem to see some meaning in them, after all. "I said I could not swim." You can't swim, can you?

KNAVE

Your majesty?

KING

Well, dead on so far – meanings galore. "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.

The jury cheers.

KING

Silence in the court!

JURY

Sh!

ALICE

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

KING

Nothing can be clearer than that. Then again – "before she had this fit" . . . you never have fits, do you my dear?

QUEEN

Never!

KING

Then these words certainly don't fit you.

The court is silent.

KING

Pun!

The courts bursts into applause.

KING

Let the jury consider their verdict.

QUEEN

No, no! Sentence first – verdict after! That's the way to do it.

ALICE

Stuff and nonsense!

The court gasps.

ALICE

The idea, sentences first.

QUEEN

Hold your tongue!

ALICE

I wo'n't!

Pause.

QUEEN

Off with her head!

The entire court, guards, animals and all rush at Alice, driving her back out of the court, the scene, the act, and even the play, and right into the epilogue.

Epilogue: All in the Golden
Afternoon

Alice gives a scream of fear and rage...

ALICE
...who cares for you..?

FLOTSAM
...who...

BEDLAM
...who...

ALICE
...who...

FLOTSAM
...who cares...

ALICE
...cares, cares...

BEDLAM
...who cares for...

ALICE
...who cares for you...

BEDLAM
...you...

FLOTSAM
...Alice...

ALICE
...you...

ALICE
...who cares for you...?

Silence.

ALL

Who cares for you..?

*...and we are back on the bank by the river
once again, Alice being shaken softly by her
sister...*

LORINA

...Alice...

BEDLAM

...who cares...

FLOTSAM

...Alice...

ALICE

...you're nothing...

LORINA

...Alice, Alice...

FLOTSAM

...Alice...

ALICE

...you're nothing...

LORINA

...Alice...

ALICE

...nothing...

ALICE

...Alice...

LORINA

...Alice...

ALICE

...you're nothing...

BEDLAM

...nothing...

...nothing but a pack... ALICE

...but... FLOTSAM

...Alice... LORINA

...Alice... BEDLAM

...you're nothing but... ALICE

...but... BEDLAM

...but... FLOTSAM

...you're... ALICE

...Alice, you're... LORINA

...nothing... BEDLAM

...you're nothing... ALICE

...but... FLOTSAM

...Alice... LORINA

...but a... ALICE

...pack... BEDLAM

FLOTSAM

...of...

ALICE

...cards...

ALL BUT LORINA

...you're nothing but a pack of cards, a pack of cards...

LORINA

...Alice!

And with a start, Alice awakens.

All of the other – the court, the jury, the witnesses – they all freeze.

LORINA

Alice?

ALICE

Oh, I've had such a curious dream!

LORINA

Alice...

ALICE

...the most curious people, the most curious place...

LORINA

...Alice, dear...

ALICE

...oh...

LORINA

...I'm sure it was a curious dream, dear, certainly...

ALICE

...oh, but it was...

LORINA

...certainly, yes, dear – but now run in to your tea, it's getting late.

She smooths Alice's hair, picking a few dead leaves out of it.

ALICE

Such a curious dream.

LORINA

There, dear, there.

Alice sits a moment, looking around her – the figures, slowly fading, move out and into the darkness of the evening.

Alice rises, turns once, watching them go.

LORINA

Alice?

ALICE

Mm?

LORINA

Dear.

ALICE

Oh, yes...

...and she wanders off.

Lorina sits awhile, her book forgotten beside her, staring after Alice.

Long silence.

She smiles once, to herself and rises, brushing her skirt.

She follows after her sister, leaving the book behind.

Long silence.

Then, a rustle in the leaves.

The White Rabbit enters furtively. Its coat,

hat, watch are gone – it is, after all, only a rabbit.

It hops over to the forgotten book and sniffs carefully.

Pause.

The White Rabbit paws the pages for a moment, then nibbles at it.

It sits a moment, angling its ears, testing the wind for sounds.

Nothing.

It gives the book one more paw and turns to go.

When it is nearly out of sight we hear it mutter...

WHITE RABBIT

...whuh-whuh-whuh-what is thuh-thuh-the use of a buh-buh-buh-buh-book wuh-without puh-puh-puh-pictures or cuh-cuh-conversations..?

...and then it is gone.

Long pause.

Silence, but for the sound of the pages rustling in the warm breeze.

Fade.