

ALICE IN WONDERLAND (AND BACK AGAIN)

A full-length play by
Randy Wyatt

Based on the books by Lewis Carroll

This script is for evaluation only. It may not be printed, photocopied or distributed digitally under any circumstances. Possession of this file does not grant the right to perform this play or any portion of it, or to use it for classroom study.

www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

Alice in Wonderland (and back again) © 2010 Randy Wyatt
All rights reserved. ISBN 978-1-62088-367-9.

Caution: This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, Canada, the British Commonwealth and all other countries of the copyright union and is subject to royalty for all performances including but not limited to professional, amateur, charity and classroom whether admission is charged or presented free of charge.

Reservation of Rights: This play is the property of the author and all rights for its use are strictly reserved and must be licensed by his representative, YouthPLAYS. This prohibition of unauthorized professional and amateur stage presentations extends also to motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video and the rights of adaptation or translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments: Amateur and stock performance rights are administered exclusively by YouthPLAYS. No amateur, stock or educational theatre groups or individuals may perform this play without securing authorization and royalty arrangements in advance from YouthPLAYS. Required royalty fees for performing this play are available online at www.YouthPLAYS.com. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Required royalties must be paid each time this play is performed and may not be transferred to any other performance entity. All licensing requests and inquiries should be addressed to YouthPLAYS.

Author Credit: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisements and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line with no other accompanying written matter. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s) and the name of the author(s) may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution: All programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with YouthPLAYS (www.youthplays.com).

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying: Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book, whether by photocopying, scanning, video recording or any other means, is strictly prohibited by law. This book may only be copied by licensed productions with the purchase of a photocopy license, or with explicit permission from YouthPLAYS.

Trade Marks, Public Figures & Musical Works: This play may contain references to brand names or public figures. All references are intended only as parody or other legal means of expression. This play may also contain suggestions for the performance of a musical work (either in part or in whole). YouthPLAYS has not obtained performing rights of these works unless explicitly noted. The direction of such works is only a playwright's suggestion, and the play producer should obtain such permissions on their own. The website for the U.S. copyright office is <http://www.copyright.gov>.

COPYRIGHT RULES TO REMEMBER

1. To produce this play, you must receive prior written permission from YouthPLAYS and pay the required royalty.
2. You must pay a royalty each time the play is performed in the presence of audience members outside of the cast and crew. Royalties are due whether or not admission is charged, whether or not the play is presented for profit, for charity or for educational purposes, or whether or not anyone associated with the production is being paid.
3. No changes, including cuts or additions, are permitted to the script without written prior permission from YouthPLAYS.
4. Do not copy this book or any part of it without written permission from YouthPLAYS.
5. Credit to the author and YouthPLAYS is required on all programs and other promotional items associated with this play's performance.

When you pay royalties, you are recognizing the hard work that went into creating the play and making a statement that a play is something of value. We think this is important, and we hope that everyone will do the right thing, thus allowing playwrights to generate income and continue to create wonderful new works for the stage.

Plays are owned by the playwrights who wrote them. Violating a playwright's copyright is a very serious matter and violates both United States and international copyright law. Infringement is punishable by actual damages and attorneys' fees, statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per incident, and even possible criminal sanctions. **Infringement is theft. Don't do it.**

Have a question about copyright? Please contact us by email at info@youthplays.com or by phone at 424-703-5315. When in doubt, please ask.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ALICE

WHITE RABBIT/CONDUCTOR

MUSHROOM

PIGEON

CATERPILLAR

FROG

DUCHESS

NANNY

CHESHIRE CAT

MAD HATTER

MARCH HARE

DORMOUSE

SOLDIERS (TWO, FIVE, SEVEN)

KNAVE OF HEARTS/EXECUTIONER

KING OF HEARTS

QUEEN OF HEARTS

FLOWERS (ROSE, VIOLET, DAISY, TIGERLILY)

RED QUEEN

WHITE QUEEN

TWEEDLEDEE

TWEEDLEDUM

RED KING

HUMPTY DUMPTY

WHITE KNIGHT

BIRDS, CREATURES, SOLDIERS, JURORS, FLOWERS,
KING'S MEN

PRODUCTION NOTES

In the first production, many modes of technology were used. This is why allusions to video (in the beginning sequence) and projections in Powerpoint (used throughout) are kept in the script. However, the script works just fine with theatrical tricks to take the place of technology. The beginning voice over (V.O.) can be spoken in the darkness before the play begins. The cards at the end can all menace Alice before the stage goes dark. I welcome new interpretations of these tricky moments if you are not inclined to use technology to make them happen (though I must say that the projections with the fall are particularly effective.)

If you are not using film/video in your production, the ending should go as written through Alice's mutterings while falling asleep. As the lights go dark, strange noises and music should be heard, and then Alice should wake up in a spotlight, perhaps in a comfy armchair with a book in her lap. She should deliver the same lines and have the same realization of the crown on her head, then the lights can blackout quickly as she looks to the audience.

Also in our production, the Cheshire Cat was a life-size puppet manipulated by two actors in black with a third actor speaking his lines over a microphone. You may or may not want to go this direction. Similarly, our Duchess was a man in women's clothing. This is also optional, but it worked marvelously for us.

The play features original songs. Productions may create their own music or contact Jeff Mansk, composer for the original production, for his downloadable compositions/soundtracks. Contact details are on the play's order page on the YouthPLAYS website.

(On film: Pondsides. In old-time sepia tones, ALICE flickers to life. She lounges, bored, by a pond.)

NARRATOR (V.O.): Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it.

ALICE (V.O.): And what is the point of a book...

NARRATOR (V.O.): ...thought Alice...

ALICE (V.O.): ...without pictures or conversations?

NARRATOR (V.O.): She was wondering whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies when...

(On film: Alice suddenly sees a flash of white.)

ALICE (V.O.): What was that?

(On film: She starts to her feet and runs after it out of frame.)

(On film: Alice runs in a meadow of green.)

It looked like...like a...

(On film: Alice comes to a large hole in the ground. She looks around. She looks in. She decides and crawls into it. The film goes to black.)

(Suddenly, we see Alice, on stage, "falling." Objects in projections slowly fall past her.)

ALICE: Well! After such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!

(Bump. The fall is over. Alice gets up. A table appears on the projection. A key is on the table.)

A glass table. And a key. Now where would...oh! A tiny door with a tiny keyhole! But how could anyone ever fit through there? What's this?

(She finds and picks up a bottle.)

"Drink me." It's all very well to say "Drink me" but I will check to see if it is marked "poison" first.

(She checks. It isn't.)

No. Well then.

(She drinks.)

Curious. Tastes like...roast turkey...toffee...pineapple...buttered toast...OH.

(The projections grow around her.)

I must be shutting up like a telescope. Oh! I do hope I stop soon, or I might go out altogether, like a flame on a candle. There. I'm the right size for the door! But now I am so small...how will I do anything? I can't even reach the key.

(Her foot bumps a glass box with a cake inside.)

"Eat me." Well, I'll eat it. And whether it makes me grow to get the key, or small enough to slide under the tiny door, I don't much care which.

(She eats the cake. The objects around her shrink.)

Dear, dear! How queer everything is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I?

RABBIT: *(Off:)* Oh dear oh dear. I shall be late.

ALICE: What...who is that?

(The RABBIT hurries on, checking his waistcoat pocket watch.)

RABBIT: Oh my ears and whiskers.

ALICE: I knew it! I knew I saw him with a waistcoat and pocket watch!

RABBIT: Oh my ears and whiskers, she'll have my head. Oh she'll have my head.

ALICE: Yoo hoo! Mister Rabbit!

(Rabbit is startled and scampers off.)

Oh no! Come back, I didn't mean to scare you! Come back!

(She runs after him. The stage transforms into Wonderland. Various strange, small CREATURES randomly wander through. Alice runs in. The Rabbit is nowhere to be seen.)

Mister Rabbit! Oh. I've lost him. Where did he go? Where am I? Curiouser and curiouser!

(The Creatures take notice of Alice.)

PIGEON: Serpent!

BIRD: Serpent!

SEVERAL CREATURES: Serpent!

ALICE: I'm not a serpent! Let me alone!

PIGEON: Serpent, I say again! *(PIGEON begins to sob:)* I've tried every way, but nothing seems to suit them!

ALICE: I haven't the least idea what you're talking about.

PIGEON: As if it wasn't trouble enough hatching the eggs, but I must be on the look-out for serpents, night and day! I haven't had a wink of sleep these three weeks!

ALICE: I'm very sorry you've been annoyed.

PIGEON: And just as I'd taken the highest tree in the woods, and just as I was thinking I should be free of them at last, here you are again! Ugh, Serpent!

BIRD: Serpent!

SEVERAL CREATURES: Serpent!

ALICE: But I'm not a serpent, I tell you! I'm a — I'm a —

BIRD: Well?

ANOTHER BIRD: What are you?

PIGEON: I can see you're trying to invent something!

ALICE: I — I'm a little girl.

(All the Creatures roar with laughter. Some leave.)

PIGEON: A likely story indeed! I've seen a good many little girls in my time, but never one with such a neck as that! No, no! You're a serpent, and there's no use denying it. I suppose you'll be telling me next that you never tasted an egg!

ALICE: I have tasted eggs, certainly, but little girls eat eggs quite as much as serpents do, you know.

PIGEON: I don't believe it, but if they do, why, then they're a kind of serpent: that's all I can say.

ALICE: I've — never thought about that before.

PIGEON: You're looking for eggs, I know that well enough. And what does it matter to me whether you're a little girl or a serpent?

ALICE: It matters a good deal to me, but I'm not looking for eggs, as it happens, and if I was, I shouldn't want yours: I don't like them raw.

PIGEON: Well, be off, then!

BIRD: Be off!

PIGEON: Serpent!

BIRD: Serpent!

PIGEON: Serpent!!

ALICE: I'm not a — oh, forget it.

(Alice storms off as the Birds fly away. She is alone.)

Well! So rude! I've never in all my life met pigeons as rude as that. Serpent. I'm not a serpent. But — they all laughed when I said I was a little girl. I don't even know who I am here. Am I still me? Maybe I'm not. Who is me?

(The sound of DRUMS. Smoke. Alice investigates. The CATERPILLAR appears on his mushroom, smoking his hookah.)

CATERPILLAR: Who are you?

ALICE: I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then.

CATERPILLAR: What do you mean by that? Explain yourself!

ALICE: I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Sir, because I'm not myself, you see.

CATERPILLAR: I don't see.

ALICE: I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly, for I can't understand it myself, to begin with, and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.

CATERPILLAR: It isn't.

ALICE: Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet, but when you have to turn into a chrysalis—you will someday, you know—and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel quite strange, won't you?

CATERPILLAR: Not a bit.

ALICE: It would feel very strange to me.

CATERPILLAR: You! Who are you?

ALICE: And here we are, right back at the beginning again. I think you ought to tell me who you are first.

CATERPILLAR: Why?

ALICE: (*Storming off:*) Oh I've had enough.

CATERPILLAR: Come back!

(Alice stops, but doesn't turn around.)

I've something important to say!

(Alice slowly turns around and slowly comes back. The Caterpillar calmly smokes.)

Keep your temper.

ALICE: Is that all?

CATERPILLAR: No.

(A maddening pause.)

So. You think you're changed, do you?

ALICE: I'm afraid I am, Sir. I can't remember things as I used to -and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!

CATERPILLAR: Can't remember what things?

ALICE: Things like – things like...

CATERPILLAR: I see you've forgotten them. Recite your lessons from school. "How Doth The Little."

(Alice takes on the recital stance, and begins to recite, but becomes increasingly aware of what she's saying and the Caterpillar's reaction to it as she goes on.)

ALICE: Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves

And the mome raths outgrabe.
Beware the Jabberwock, my son –

(Eerie faraway MUSICAL THEME.)

CATERPILLAR: Stop.

(He puffs.)

That is not said right.

ALICE: Not quite right, I'm afraid.

CATERPILLAR: It is wrong from beginning to end.

ALICE: You see? I don't even know what I am saying. Oh, who am I turning into?

CATERPILLAR: What brought you here?

ALICE: *(Remembering:)* The Rabbit! A talking white Rabbit with a watch and waistcoat. But he hurried away and I lost him.

CATERPILLAR: Find the Rabbit.

ALICE: It can't be that easy.

(A FIGURE races across the stage and exits.)

CATERPILLAR: It can.

ALICE: Was that? It's him! Oh, I must Catch up to him. Thank you, sir. Mister Rabbit!

(The disapproving Caterpillar and his mushroom vanish. Alice runs in the direction of the Figure, but the Figure runs back on stage. Alice runs after him and tries to speak to him ["Mr. Rabbit!"], but his actions are erratic. She finally gets face to face with him and realizes –)

Oh! You're not. I'm terribly sorry.

(The FISH FOOTMAN doffs his hat and goes off running again...and almost bumps into the FROG FOOTMAN. They both clear their throats and straighten up into very formal poses. The Fish Footman has an oversized envelope.)

FISH: *(Solemnly:)* For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

FROG: *(Solemnly:)* From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet.

(They bow, entangling their curls together. Alice bursts into laughter but stifles herself and hides before the Footmen can catch her. The Fish hands the envelope to the Frog, then runs off in a similar manner to the way he came in. The Frog opens the envelope and reads the invitation. Alice approaches him.)

ALICE: You know, you really oughtn't open someone else's mail. It's really rather —

(A tremendous CRASH from behind the Footman, and a peal of hideous laughter. Alice is horrified. The Footman is unfazed.)

FROG: It is indeed an invitation for the Duchess to play croquet.

ALICE: What was that?!

FROG: The script is most elegant.

ALICE: That noise!

FROG: And such fine paper. But then, she is a Queen.

(Another CRASH, more laughter.)

What a fine thing it must be — to be a Queen. Don't you think?

ALICE: What is happening?

FROG: *(Philosophically:)* What ever is happening?

(He sighs, then stands at attention.)

The Duchess.

(He bows low. The Duchess races on stage, laughing and pushing a baby carriage ahead of her – the baby is squalling loudly. She is followed by a NANNY, who is wearing several pots and pans strapped to her body, clanging and crashing together as she goes. The Duchess is raucous and careless. She lets the carriage sail ahead of her as she circles around to the Frog. The Nanny Catches up to the carriage, much to Alice's relief.)

DUCHESS: For me?

FROG: *(Still bowed, presenting envelope:)* For you, your Highness.

(Duchess takes the invitation and reads it. Meanwhile, Nanny begins roughly bouncing the carriage, singing a frightful lullaby.)

NANNY: *(Beating pans in time:)* Speak roughly to your little boy

And chide him when he sneezes

He only does it to annoy

Because he knows it teases!

Wow wow wow!

ALICE: Oh PLEASE do be careful. The baby!

(The Nanny shoves the carriage off in a different direction. Alice shrieks and runs after it, but it is intercepted by the Duchess, who is still reading her invitation.)

DUCHESS: Croquet. Another game of croquet with the Queen. Lucky, lucky me. And yet I can't very well say no, can I?

(She sighs, and shoves the carriage away from her to nowhere in particular. Alice runs after it but it is intercepted by Nanny. Duchess hands the invitation back to Frog.)

© Randy Wyatt

This is a perusal copy only.

Absolutely no printing, copying or performance permitted.

I accept.

FROG: (*Who was daydreaming:*) What? Oh, uh, fine. Your Highness.

(Duchess cuffs him.)

DUCHESS: Wake up! What kind of footman are you?

FROG: (*Philosophically:*) What kind of footman AM I?

DUCHESS: Stupid!

NANNY: (*Bouncing the carriage violently:*) I speak severely to the boy

I chide him when he sneezes
For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases!

(Nanny whips out a large pepper grinder and grinds pepper into the carriage, much to Alice's horror.)

ALICE: Oh PLEASE mind the baby! Pepper can't be good for it!

DUCHESS: If everyone minded their own business, the world would go round a good deal faster than it does.

ALICE: Which would not be an advantage. Just think what work it would make for the day and night! You see the earth takes 24 hours to fully rotate on its OH DO PLEASE BE CAREFUL.

(Nanny has shoved the carriage towards nothing once again, but the Duchess intercepts it, and bounces it mercilessly.)

DUCHESS: I suppose I shall have to be dressed for a royal occasion too! What a bother and a nuisance.

FROG: (*Bowing low:*) The Cheshire Cat!

(The CHESHIRE CAT appears, grinning. Alice is intrigued.)

DUCHESS: Oh him.

ALICE: Why does your Cat grin like that?

DUCHESS: ("You moron:") Because it is a Cheshire Cat and that's why. (To baby:) PIG!

ALICE: I didn't know Cheshire Cats grinned. I didn't know Cats could grin at all.

DUCHESS: You don't know much, and that's a fact.

(The Duchess shoves the carriage towards nothing again, but the clattering Nanny intercepts.)

NANNY: I speak severely to the boy –

ALICE: Please! Don't you know any OTHER nursery rhymes? That one is so horrid!

(Nanny thinks, then starts a different one. Distant echoey MUSIC plays underneath.)

NANNY: Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

ALICE: Wait a moment.

NANNY: All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.

ALICE: I've heard that before.

NANNY: Beware the Jabberwock, my son.
The jaws that bite, the claws that Catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!

ALICE: I don't think that's much better.

NANNY: More pepper!

(Nanny grinds more pepper into the carriage. Alice finally seizes the carriage and picks the baby, wrapped in a blanket, out of it.)

ALICE: You both ought to be terribly ashamed. I have never seen a baby treated in such a way in all my life!

(The baby makes a pig sound.)

Babies require tenderness and care! What sort of Nanny are you? Pepper indeed!

(The baby makes several more pig sounds. Alice looks dubiously at the baby, and speaks to it.)

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

(The PIG grunts and squeals.)

DUCHESS: You may nurse it a bit if you like. I must go and get ready to play croquet with the Queen!

(The Duchess exits, followed by the Nanny and Frog.)

ALICE: But what am I to do with—?

(But they are gone.)

People come and go so quickly here.

(The Pig grunts again.)

If you are going to turn into a pig, I'll have nothing to do with you. Mind now!

(She pulls back the blanket to reveal a pig. It grunts again.)

Oh dear.

(Another grunt. Alice places the Pig back in the carriage. The carriage sails away offstage.)

Well. How very odd. Now if I could only—oh!

(She is startled by the Cheshire Cat, who is staring intently at her.)

Hello? Cheshire—puss?

(The Cat wags its tail.)

Well, it's pleased so far. Can you tell me, please, which way I ought to go 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 go.

ALICE: So long as I get somewhere.

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

(The Cat's grin separates from the Cat and floats above and around the Cat. Alice isn't sure which to address her question to.)

ALICE: What sort of people live around here?

CAT: In this direction—

(The GRIN floats in one direction.)

—lives a Hatter. And in THIS direction—

(The Grin floats in another direction.)

—lives a March Hare. Visit either you like. They're both mad.

ALICE: But I don't want to go about mad people.

CAT: 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 have come here.

ALICE: How do you know you're mad?

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

ALICE: I suppose so.

CAT: Well, then, 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.

ALICE: I call it purring, not growling.

CAT: Call it what you like. 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 Cat vanishes, then reappears.)

By-the-bye, what became of the baby? I forgot to ask.

ALICE: It turned into a pig.

CAT: I thought it would.

(The Cat vanishes. Alice turns to go but the grin follows her.)

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.

(The Cat vanishes.)

ALICE: 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!

(There is a CLAMOR that startles Alice. She looks offstage, then her eyes widen, as what she sees is coming very quickly. She stumbles over herself backing up. The TEA PARTY arrives on a wheeled table. The DORMOUSE is asleep on the table,

surrounded by tea things. He is cuddling a large pot of tea. The HATTER and HARE are pushing the table on. Then they set up chairs around it while singing/chanting a poem that Alice finds oddly familiar.)

HATTER AND HARE: He took his vorpal sword in hand:
 Long time the manxome foe he sought—
 So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
 And stood awhile in thought.
 And, as in uffish thought he stood,
 The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
 Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
 And burbled as it came!
 One, two! One, two! And through and through
 The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
 He left it dead, and with its head
 He went galumphing back.

ALICE: What is that?

(They freeze.)

That poem! What is it?

HATTER: Nothing!

HARE: Absolutely nothing.

HATTER: Absolutely nothing.

HARE: Nothing at all.

ALICE: It must be something.

HATTER: Just a trifle I made up.

HARE: Gone like smoke.

DORMOUSE: *(In his sleep:)* Twas brillig, and the slithy toves—

(The Hare pinches him and he squeals awake.)

ALICE: *(Stepping forward:)* He just said—

© Randy Wyatt

This is a perusal copy only.

Absolutely no printing, copying or performance permitted.

HATTER AND MARCH HARE: No room! No room!

ALICE: (*Seating herself:*) There's PLENTY of room!

(The Hatter, Dormouse and Hare seat themselves. An awkward pause.)

MARCH HARE: Have some wine.

ALICE: I don't see any wine.

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: Your table is laid for a great many more than three.

HATTER: (*Uncomfortably close:*) 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! A riddle! I believe I can guess that.

MARCH HARE: Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?

ALICE: Exactly so.

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! 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: (*Snoring:*) 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. SWITCH!

(All switch to the next chair down.)

SILENCE.

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 fumes. The Hare starts pouring tea into Alice's cup...and pours and pours and pours.)

What day of the month is it?

ALICE: The fourth. (*To Hare:*) Thank you.

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

MARCH HARE: It was the BEST butter.

ALICE: (*To Hare:*) THANK you. That's QUITE enough.

(He keeps pouring. She takes her cup away. He keeps pouring.)

HATTER: Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well. You shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife.

MARCH HARE: (*Sulkily:*) It was the BEST butter, you know.

(He finishes pouring the tea into the table. Alice notices Hatter's watch:)

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, but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together.

HATTER: Which is just the case with MINE.

MARCH HARE: The Dormouse is asleep again.

(The Hare pours some tea onto the Dormouse's face. Dormouse wakes with a start.)

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.

MARCH HARE: Nor I.

ALICE: I think you might do something better with the time, than waste 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: *(Cautiously:)* 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!

MARCH HARE: (*To himself:*) 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— (*Pointing with his tea spoon at the March Hare:*) —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: (*Trying not to notice the Hare chomping an entire loaf of bread:*) I've heard something like it.

HATTER: It goes on, you know, in this way: "Up above the world you fly, Like a tea-tray in the sky. Twinkle, twinkle—"

DORMOUSE: (*In sleep:*) Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle—

(The Hare pours more tea on Dormouse, who shrieks awake.)

HATTER: Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse, when the Queen jumped up and 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 what happens when you come to the beginning again?

MARCH HARE: Suppose we change the subject. I'm getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story.

ALICE: I'm afraid I don't know one.

HATTER: Then the Dormouse shall! Wake up, Dormouse!

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

MARCH HARE: Tell us a story!

ALICE: Yes, please do!

HATTER: (*Dunking his watch in his tea:*) 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—

ALICE: What did they eat?

DORMOUSE: Nothing but honey.

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?

HARE: SWITCH!

(They all switch again.)

ALICE: Why did they live at the bottom of a well?

DORMOUSE: It was a honey-well.

ALICE: There's no such thing!

HATTER/MARCH HARE: Sh! Sh!

DORMOUSE: (*Offended:*) If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story for yourself.

ALICE: No, please go on! I won't interrupt 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?

(Hatter and Hare roll their eyes, act exasperated.)

DORMOUSE: Honey.

ALICE: But I don't understand. Where did they draw the honey from?

HATTER: You can draw water out of a water-well, so I should think you could draw honey out of a honey-well – eh, stupid?

ALICE: But they were IN the well.

DORMOUSE: (*Yawning:*) Of course they were – well in.

(He falls asleep into something messy.)

ALICE: (*Standing:*) Oh, I've had ENOUGH.

HATTER: Then you should be done.

HARE: Excuse yourself!

HATTER: Off with you!

HARE: Good afternoon!

HATTER: Good night!

HARE AND HATTER: Good luck!

(The table wheels off as they chant their poem again. Alice is left alone.)

ALICE: That's the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life! And that poem again...

(A SOLDIER appears. He is painting a bouquet of white roses red with a large paintbrush.)

That's very curious! But everything's curious today.

(Two other SOLDIERS run on carelessly and bump into the first.)

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

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

SEVEN: That's right, Five! Always lay the blame on others!

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

TWO: What for?

SEVEN: That's none of your business, Two!

FIVE: Yes, it is his business! And I'll tell him—it was for bringing the cook tulip-roots instead of onions.

SEVEN: Well, of all the unjust things—

ALICE: Excuse me.

(The Soldiers all straighten up.)

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

TWO: *(Timidly:)* Why, the fact is, you see, Miss, this here ought to have been red rose-trees, and we put white ones in by mistake; and, if the Queen was to find it out, we should all have our heads cut off, you know. So, you see, Miss, we're doing our best, before she comes, to—

FIVE: The Queen! The Queen!

(The Soldiers scuttle around and try to hide behind their bouquets, becoming "trees." The Duchess enters and sees the trees.)

DUCHESS: Hmmm. Those are supposed to be red.

SEVEN: It's only the Duchess.

TWO AND FIVE: Only the Duchess.

DUCHESS: HER HIGHNESS.

TWO, FIVE AND SEVEN: HER HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS.

DUCHESS: That's right. Well? Shouldn't you be preparing the grounds for the game? The Queen will be along any minute now.

(The Soldiers scramble offstage.)

Idiots.

(She spies Alice, smiles broadly, and comes down to her.)

Well now! You can't think how glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing! How are you? What are you? Thinking about, I mean! Ha ha ha! What are you thinking about?

ALICE: I'm just—

DUCHESS: You're thinking, I can tell, and it makes you forget to talk. I can't think of what the moral of that is, but in a moment I surely will think of it.

ALICE: Perhaps it hasn't got a moral.

DUCHESS: Tut tut child! Everything has a moral if only you take a moment to look for it.

(The Soldiers scramble back on, setting up flamingos and hedgehogs for the croquet match.)

ALICE: Whatever are they doing?

© Randy Wyatt

This is a perusal copy only.

Absolutely no printing, copying or performance permitted.

DUCHESS: Preparing for croquet, of course! And the moral of that is "Tis love, tis love, that makes the world go round!"

ALICE: SOMEONE once said it happened by people minding their own business.

DUCHESS: (*Digging her chin onto Alice's shoulder:*) Oh, it's much the same thing. Don't you think? Do you know how to play croquet?

ALICE: (*Gently freeing herself from the Duchess' sharp chin:*) I—know one way to play.

DUCHESS: This is the proper way. The Queen's way! Allow me to teach you.

THE ROYAL WAY TO PLAY CROQUET.

DUCHESS: WHEN I WAS JUST A TINY LASS, AS PRETTY AS CAN BE,
MY NANNY SAT ME DOWN ONE DAY RIGHT AFTER ROYAL TEA.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO LEARN, SAID SHE IN HER SHRILL VOICE,
THE ROYAL WAY TO PLAY CROQUET. YOU SIMPLY HAVE NO CHOICE!

SOLDIERS: THE ROYAL WAY TO PLAY CROQUET – YOU SIMPLY HAVE NO CHOICE!

DUCHESS: SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE A DUCHESS, CHILD. MY QUEER OLD NANNY SAID.

AND IF YOU PLAY IMPROPERLY, THE QUEEN WILL HAVE YOUR HEAD.

BUT IF YOU WRITE THESE SIMPLE RULES UPON YOUR HEAD AND HEART

YOU'LL ALWAYS PLAY THE ROYAL WAY. NOW THIS IS HOW WE START.

SOLDIERS: YOU'LL ALWAYS PLAY THE ROYAL WAY.
NOW THIS IS HOW WE START. RULE ONE!

DUCHESS: FOR YOUR CROQUET Mallet, CHILD, NOT
JUST ANY BIRD WILL DO.
THE FLUTTERY FLAMINGO IS THE ROYAL BIRD FOR
YOU.

ALICE: Bird?!

DUCHESS: GRASP HER BY THE WAIST; TAKE CARE THIS
COMES AS NO SURPRISE
THE FLAMINGO IS NOTORIOUS FOR PECKING PLAYERS'
EYES!

SOLDIERS: RULE TWO!

DUCHESS: PICK OUT A FUZZY HEDGEHOG. HE'LL BE
YOUR BALL, YOU SEE.

UNLESS THAT FUZZY HEDGEHOG DISCOVERS
SOMETHING ELSE TO BE.

BE DILIGENT TO ALWAYS TUCK HIS LEGS INSIDE HIS
FRAME

OR ELSE HE'LL WANDER OFF AND THEN – OH DEAR!
YOU'VE LOST THE GAME.

IF YOU'VE GOT RULES ONE AND TWO, NOW MASTER
NUMBER THREE.

DIRECT YOUR BALL FORTHWITH TO THE WICKET THAT
YOU SEE.

THE WICKET IS ALIVE OF COURSE, BUT I BET YOU
COULD HAVE GUESSED

WHEN YOU PLAY CROQUET THE ROYAL WAY, THERE IS
NO SECOND BEST!

SOLDIERS: WHEN YOU PLAY CROQUET THE ROYAL
WAY, THERE IS NO SECOND BEST.

DUCHESS: SO HERE WE HAVE THE ELEMENTS: THE
WICKET, BIRD AND BALL.

WITH ALL YOU MUST BE MINDFUL OF, IT'S HARD TO
THINK AT ALL.

BUT DO IT ALL YOU MUST – AND SMILE! – AND ONE
MORE THING MY DEAR.

ALLOW THE QUEEN TO WIN EACH TIME – YOU'LL LIVE
TO PLAY NEXT YEAR!

SOLDIERS: ALLOW THE QUEEN TO WIN EACH TIME –
YOU'LL LIVE TO PLAY NEXT YEAR!

(Throughout the song, Alice tries and utterly fails to grasp the sport.)

DUCHESS: Hmm. You could use a little practice.

WHITE RABBIT: *(Entering quickly:)* No time! There's no time.
The Queen is here!

(The Soldiers scatter and eventually wind up at attention. The PROCESSIONAL begins. A trumpeter heralds the arrival of the KING and QUEEN OF HEARTS.)

QUEEN OF HEARTS: *(As she marches along:)* It's far too warm.
Your shirt is wrinkled. Don't smirk at me. Off with your
head! I'm tired of walking. The earth should spin in my
direction. I'm the Queen. Places I want to go should come to
me. Stand up straight. Don't look at me. Only three of you?
Stupid grass. Who's responsible? Off with his head! You're
all trying my patience. Do what I say or it's off with your head
for the lot of you.

WHITE RABBIT: Her Majesty, the Queen.

(All bow. The Queen continues her tirade.)

QUEEN OF HEARTS: Louder, Rabbit. Out of my way!
Incompetent fools. WHO IS THAT?!

(The Soldiers say nothing.)

QUEEN OF HEARTS: IDIOTS. *(To Alice:)* Who are you, 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.

QUEEN: Impertinent girl! Off with her head!

ALICE: Nonsense!

QUEEN: Off with her head! Off with her —

KING: Consider, my dear. She is only a child.

(The Queen chuffs, but gives. She turns her attention to the Soldiers who are face down on the ground.)

QUEEN: Turn them over!

(The Rabbit turns them over. They lie there, whimpering.)

Get up!

(They do immediately, and bow over and over again saying "Your Majesty.")

Leave off that. You make me giddy.

(She sees one of the branches.)

What have you been doing here?

TWO: May it please your Majesty, we were trying —

QUEEN: I see. Off with their heads!

KING: My dear, we need them to play croquet with.

QUEEN: These clowns? Ugh. *(To Alice:)* You know how to play croquet?

ALICE: Yes, your Majesty.

QUEEN: Properly?

ALICE: I do.

QUEEN: Come on then! Hurry up, morons!

(The Soldiers scramble to become the croquet field. The White Rabbit approaches Alice, as she realizes the Duchess has disappeared.)

RABBIT: It's — it's a very fine day!

ALICE: Very. Where's the Duchess?

RABBIT: Hush! Hush! Run off, I imagine. She's 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: She boxed the Queen's ears —

(Alice laughs.)

Oh, hush! The Queen will hear you! You see she came rather late, and the Queen said —

QUEEN: Get to your places!

(Everyone gets into place. The Queen goes first, of course, while Alice politely watches.)

KING: Now you will watch a seasoned player in action!

(The Queen plays, and everything works completely in her favor.)

See that? Excellent, my dear. Three hundred points! How many is that in total?

RABBIT: Four million!

(The guests all clap appreciatively.)

KING: You've won another round, my dear.

QUEEN: Of course I have.

(Alice rolls her eyes and is bored. The Queen continues to play while Alice notices a floating grin.)

ALICE: What is that? Why, it's the Cheshire Cat! Come, now I will have someone to talk to.

CHESHIRE CAT: *(Just the grin:)* How are you getting along?

ALICE: I think I'll wait until the entire Cat appears, thank you.

(The Cat fully appears.)

Well. I don't think they play at all fairly, and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak—and they don't seem to have any rules in particular: at least, if there are, nobody attends to them—and you've no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive.

CHESHIRE CAT: How do you like the Queen?

ALICE: Not at all, she's so extremely —

(Suddenly, the entire croquet game is focused on Alice. There is dead silence. Alice quickly changes gears.)

—likely to win, that it's hardly worth finishing the game.

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.

CHESHIRE 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: *(Not even turning around:)* Off with his head!

KING: Executioner!

(The EXECUTIONER runs on and kneels.)

You heard her Majesty. Off with his head.

(The Executioner approaches the Cat, axe raised, but he stops, puzzled.)

EXECUTIONER: *(Cockney:)* Here! This Cat's all head!

KING: So behead him.

EXECUTIONER: He's got no body to cut it off from!

KING: So?

EXECUTIONER: I can't very well cut a head off if there's nothing to cut it off from, can I?

KING: If there's a head, then it can be beheaded. Don't talk nonsense.

EXECUTIONER: I've never cut a head off a headless body before, and I'm not about to start at this time o' me life.

QUEEN: If someone doesn't do something soon, I'll have everyone here executed, all around.

EXECUTIONER: I just don't see how I'm supposed to—

QUEEN: Wait a moment. I know that voice.

(She rips the mask off of the Executioner. It's the KNAVE OF HEARTS. All gasp.)

I knew it! Thief! Guards!

(The Knave starts to run but the Soldiers all dog-pile on top of him.)

Off with his head!

KNAVE: I can't very well cut my own head off, can I?

QUEEN: This scoundrel is an enemy of the state! Off with his head!

KING: We must have a trial, dear. He must appear in court.

QUEEN: Aaaagh! Fine then. But I don't want to walk all the way back to the palace. Set up court!

(Soldiers and others scramble to set up court there on the lawn. The Cat disappears as the Rabbit guides Alice to a chair.)

RABBIT: Oh my. Oh my oh my.

ALICE: What is going on?

RABBIT: That's the Knave of Hearts. He is accused of stealing tarts from the Royal Court.

(The tarts are wheeled by at that moment.)

ALICE: These tarts?

RABBIT: The very ones.

ALICE: They look delicious.

RABBIT: They're evidence!

ALICE: They should hurry up the trial and pass out the refreshments.

RABBIT: *(As the King dons a large white wig:)* And the judge, His Holiness. And come, there are the jurors.

ALICE: What are they writing? The trial hasn't started yet.

RABBIT: I'll look.

KING: Let us come to order.

(Rabbit looks over their shoulders, then returns.)

RABBIT: They are all writing their names down, for fear they will forget them by the end of the trial.

ALICE: Stupid things!

JURORS: (*Writing:*) Stupid things.

KING: Silence in the court! Herald, read the accusation!

RABBIT: (*Reading from a scroll:*) 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!

KING: (*After a few harrumph noises:*) Consider your verdict.

JURORS: Guilty!

RABBIT: Not yet, not yet! There's a great deal to come before that!

(The Jurors look perplexed, then all start scribbling out what they've written.)

KING: If we must. Call the first witness.

RABBIT: First witness!

JURORS: (*Writing:*) First witness.

(The Hatter takes the stand. The Hare and Dormouse watch from a distance. The Hatter is eating a bun and drinking tea.)

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. When did you begin?

HATTER: Fourteenth of March, I think it was.

HARE: Fifteenth.

DORMOUSE: Sixteenth.

KING: *(To Jurors:)* Write that down.

(The Jurors all mutter different dates as they write them down.)

(To Hatter:) Take off your hat. You are in court.

HATTER: It isn't mine.

KING: Stolen!

JURORS: *(Writing:)* Stolen!!

HATTER: No, no. I keep them to sell. I've none of my own. I'm a Hatter.

(The Jurors all scratch it out.)

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

HATTER: I'm a poor man, your Majesty, 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?

JURORS: *(Writing:)* Twinkling begins with "T."

KING: Go on!

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

HARE: I didn't!

JURORS: *(Writing:)* He didn't!

HATTER: You did!

JURORS: *(Writing:)* He did.

HARE: I deny it!

KING: He denies it. Leave out that part.

JURORS: (*Writing:*) Leave out that part.

HATTER: Well, at any rate, the Dormouse said...um. And after that, I cut some more bread-and-butter —

KING: But what did the Dormouse say?

HATTER: That I can't remember.

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

HATTER: (*Falling to his knees:*) I'm a poor man, your Majesty.

KING: You're a very poor speaker.

HATTER: (*Falling prone on the floor:*) That's all I know, your Majesty.

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

HATTER: I can't go no lower.

JURORS: (*Writing:*) He can't go no lower.

KING: Then you may sit down.

HATTER: May I...finish my tea?

KING: You may go.

(The Hatter runs off, with the Hare following. The Dormouse remains behind, snoring.)

QUEEN: ...and just take his head off outside.

KING: Call the next witness!

QUEEN: Next witness!

RABBIT: Next witness!

(The Nanny takes the stand, not thrilled about it.)

KING: Give your evidence!

NANNY: Nope.

KING: Hmmmm.

JURORS: (*Writing:*) Hmmmm.

RABBIT: Your Majesty must cross-examine this witness.

KING: Well, if I must, I must. What are tarts made of?

NANNY: How should I know?

DORMOUSE: (*Snoring:*) Honey.

QUEEN: (*Furious:*) Collar that Dormouse! Behead that Dormouse! Turn that Dormouse out of court! Suppress him! Pinch him! Off with his whiskers!

(The Hatter and Hare come and collect Dormouse in a hurry.)

KING: Ah well. Never mind!

JURORS: (*Writing:*) Never mind.

ALICE: Oh, what nonsense this all is.

KING: Call the next witness. (*To Queen:*) Really, my dear, you must cross-examine the next witness. It quite makes my forehead ache.

RABBIT: Alice!

ALICE: (*Jumping up:*) Here!

(She takes the stand. The King looks her over.)

KING: (*Suspiciously:*) Yes. Alice.

JURORS: (*Writing, suspiciously:*) Alice.

KING: What do you know about this business?

ALICE: Nothing.

KING: Nothing whatever?

ALICE: Nothing whatever.

KING: That's very important.

JURORS: (*Writing:*) Very important.

RABBIT: Unimportant, your Majesty means, of course.

KING: Unimportant, of course, I meant.

JURORS: Unimportant.

KING: Unimportant, of course. Important – unimportant – unimportant – important –

JURORS: (*Echoing, writing and scratching out:*) Important – unimportant – important – unimportant –

QUEEN: STOP ALL THIS OR YOUR HEADS WILL ALL BE OFF!

(The Jurors all hit the deck and tremble.)

KING: Consider your verdict.

JURORS: (*Popping up:*) Guilty!

RABBIT: No, no, no! There's more evidence to come yet. Please, Your Majesty, this paper has just been picked up.

KING: What's in it?

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

KING: It must have been that, unless it was written to nobody, which isn't usual, you know. Who is it directed to?

RABBIT: It isn't directed at all. In fact, there's nothing written on the outside. It isn't a letter, after all: it's a set of verses.

KING: Are they in the prisoner's handwriting?

RABBIT: No, they're not, and that's the strangest thing about it.

KING: He must have imitated somebody else's hand.

KNAVE: Please, your Majesty.

QUEEN: Hold your tongue!

KNAVE: I didn't write it, and they can't prove that I did. There's no name signed at the end.

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 honesty man.

QUEEN: That proves his guilt, of course, so, off with—

ALICE: It doesn't prove anything of the sort! Why, you don't even know what they're about!

KING: *(To Alice:)* Read them.

ALICE: Uh...very well.
Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

KING: STOP.

(The Jurors all hit the deck and tremble. Everyone looks very nervous.)

What on earth are you reading?

ALICE: I'm sure I don't know. But I've heard this before...

KING: *(To Rabbit:)* Read them.

(The Rabbit takes the verses from Alice and begins to read them.)

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.

ALICE: That's not what they say.

(She snatches the verses back and reads.)

What? The letters are changing...
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.
Beware the Jabberwock, my son—

KING: Enough! Rule 42. "No inappropriate verse shall be read in the court!"

ALICE: You just made up that rule.

KING: It's the oldest rule in the book.

ALICE: Then it ought to be number one.

QUEEN: Enough!

KING: Consider your verdict!

JURORS: Guilty!

QUEEN: Sentence first, verdict afterwards.

ALICE: Stuff and nonsense! Imagine the verdict after the sentence.

QUEEN: Hold your tongue!

ALICE: I won't!

QUEEN: Off with her head!

ALICE: Who cares for all of you? You're all just a pack of cards!

(PROJECTIONS: Cards flying through the air. Strange music. Lighting swirls and Alice runs to a corner as the projections take over. Suddenly, blackout. Then Alice appears crouched in a light, and gasps as if waking up from a dream.)

Oh. I'm back. It was—just a dream. But—

(She still holds the verses. She reads them.)

Twas brillig and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
 All mimsy were the borogoves
 And the mome raths outgrabe.
 These verses....follow me.

(There is laughter [from the FLOWERS]. Alice turns to look – there is the looking glass.)

Maybe I'm not back. Hello?

(More laughter.)

It's from the other side...of the looking glass.

(She approaches it. She stretches her hand out. It stops.)

I can't get through. Well, of course, silly Alice. You can't walk through a looking glass. It's just that everything is odd today –

(Alice stops. She considers the verse in her hand. She reads.)

Beware the Jabberwock, my son,
 The jaws that bite, the claws that Catch.
 Beware the Jubjub bird and shun
 The frumious Bandersnatch!

(There is a distant noise. Alice tries the looking glass again, and finds she can pass through. She folds up the verses and pockets them.)

How did I know that would work? I don't think the way I used to. Nonsense is becoming – commonplace to me. But if nonsense is how I think, then...who am I becoming?

(Laughter again.)

Hello? I'm coming!

(Alice crawls through the looking glass. There is a shadow, perhaps smoke, on the projections, and a distant ROAR. Blackout. End of Act One.)

ACT II

(The looking glass. There is a box of flowers/garden DS near a bench. Alice climbs through.)

ALICE: NOW where am I? It seems like home, but...there. Everything's backwards. Dinah! Sweet kitty! Are you here? Dinah? I'm alone.

(She sits on the bench.)

O Tiger-lily. I wish you could talk!

TIGERLILY: We can talk, when there's anybody worth talking to.

(Alice yelps and jumps up.)

ALICE: And can all the flowers talk?

TIGERLILY: As well as you can. And a great deal louder.

ROSE: It isn't mannerly for us to begin, you know. I really was wondering when you'd speak! Said I to myself, "Her face has got some sense in it, though it's not a clever one!" Still, you're the right color, and that goes a long way.

TIGERLILY: I don't care about the color. If only her petals curled up a little more, she'd be all right.

ALICE: Aren't you sometimes frightened at being planted here, with nobody to take care of you?

ROSE: There's the tree in the courtyard. What else is it good for?

ALICE: But what could it do if any danger came?

ROSE: It could bark.

DAISY: It says "Boughwough!" That's why its branches are called boughs!

VIOLET: Didn't you know that?

TIGERLILY: Silence, every one of you! They know I can't get at them! Or they wouldn't dare do it!

ALICE: Never mind! If you don't hold your tongues, I'll pick you!

TIGERLILY: That's right! The daisies are worst of all. When one speaks, they all begin together. It's enough to make one wither to hear the way they go on!

ALICE: How is it you can all talk so nicely? I've been in many gardens before, but none of the flowers could talk.

TIGERLILY: Put your hands down and feel the ground, then you'll know why.

(She does.)

ALICE: It's very hard, but I don't see what that has to do with it.

TIGERLILY: In most gardens, they make the beds too soft—so that the flowers are always asleep.

ALICE: I never thought of that before!

ROSE: It's my opinion that you never think at all.

VIOLET: I never saw anybody that looked stupider.

TIGERLILY: Hold your tongue! As if you ever saw anybody! You keep your head under the leaves, and snore away there, till you know no more what's going on in the world than if you were a bud!

ALICE: Are there any more people in the garden besides me?

ROSE: There's one other flower in the garden that can move about like you. I wonder how you do it. But she's bushier than you are.

ALICE: Is she like me? There's another little girl in the garden, somewhere!

VIOLET: Well, she has the same awkward shape as you, but she's redder – and her petals are shorter, I think.

DAISY: They're done up close, like a dahlia, not tumbled about, like yours.

ROSE: But that's not your fault. You're beginning to fade, you know – and then one can't help one's petals getting a little untidy.

ALICE: Does she ever come out here?

ROSE: I daresay you'll see her soon. She's one of the kind that has nine spikes, you know.

ALICE: Nine spikes? Where does she wear them?

ROSE: Why, all around her head, of course.

TIGERLILY: I was wondering you hadn't got some too. I thought it was the regular rule.

DAISY: She's coming! I hear her footsteps, thump, thump, along the gravel walk!

ALICE: I think I'll go and meet her.

ROSE: You can't possibly do that. I should advise you to walk the other way.

ALICE: What do you mean? Oh, here she is.

(The RED QUEEN appears, walking backwards. Alice walks towards her, but the Queen walks in a different direction. Alice tries several times, then starts walking backwards, which causes the Queen to walk forwards. They keep working logistically to finally meet face to face.)

RED QUEEN: Where do you come from? And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time.

ALICE: *(Trying to do these things:)* I – I'm afraid 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 – but why did you come out here at all? Curtsey while you're thinking what to say. It saves time.

(Alice curtsies. Queen looks at her watch.)

It's time for you to answer...now. Open a little wider when you speak, and always say "Your Majesty."

ALICE: I only wanted to see what the garden was like, Your Majesty –

RED QUEEN: That's right, though, when you say "garden" – I've seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness.

ALICE: – and I thought I'd try and find my way to the top of that hill –

RED QUEEN: When you say "hill" I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley.

ALICE: No, I shouldn't, a hill can't be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense –

RED QUEEN: You may call it "nonsense" if you like, but I've heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!

DAISY: You mean you can move about, but you've never looked out the top of the hill?

VIOLET: Oh, if only I could.

TIGERLILY: You really must.

RED QUEEN: They are right, my dear. Go and take a look.

(Alice goes to the top of the hill and looks about.)

PROJECTIONS: chess squares and horizons.)

© Randy Wyatt

This is a perusal copy only.

Absolutely no printing, copying or performance permitted.

ALICE: I declare it's marked out just like a large chessboard! There ought to be some men moving about somewhere – and so there are!

RED QUEEN: It's a great huge game of chess that's being played.

ROSE: All over the world.

VIOLET: If this is the world at all, you know.

ALICE: Oh, what fun it is! How I wish I was one of them! I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join – though of course I should like to be a Queen best.

RED QUEEN: That's easily managed. You can be the White Queen's Pawn, if you like, as Lily's too young to play.

(FLOWERS moan.)

You're here in the Second Square to begin with. When you get to the Eighth Square you'll be a Queen.

ALICE: The eighth square.

RED QUEEN: *(Looking at watch:)* And now it is time to refresh the flowers.

(Red Queen fetches a watering can and begins to water the flowers.)

VIOLET: Finally!

ROSE: Ahhh.

DAISY: You're late today.

ALICE: Oh, that looks so refreshing! And it is rather hot and dry today.

RED QUEEN: *(Approaching Alice and offering:)* I know what you'd like! Have a biscuit?

(Alice smiles weakly and takes the biscuit. It is dry and she barely chokes it down.)

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

(She pulls out a measuring tape and puts "pegs" in the ground at the marks she indicates.)

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

ALICE: *(Coughing:)* No, thank you, one's quite enough!

RED QUEEN: Thirst quenched, I hope?

(Big smile. Alice says nothing.)

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!

(The Queen solemnly walks back to the two-yard mark.)

A pawn goes two squares in its first move, you know. So you'll go very quickly through the Third Square—by railway, I should think—and you'll find yourself in the Fourth Square in no time. Well, that square belongs to Tweedledum and Tweedledee—the Fifth is mostly water—the Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty—No remark?

ALICE: I didn't know I had to make one.

RED QUEEN: You should have said, "It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this"—however, we'll suppose it said—the Seventh Square is all forest—however, one of the Knights will show you the way—and in the Eighth Square we shall be Queens together, and it's all feasting and fun!

ALICE: That sounds delightful!

RED QUEEN: Oh, it is. Three yards. A pawn goes—

ALICE: You needn't repeat them, Your Majesty. I remember them.

RED QUEEN: All right then. I shall just tell you this. Speak in French when you can't think of the English for a thing—turn out your toes as you walk—and remember who you are!

ALICE: Who I am.

RED QUEEN: That's right. Yard five. Until we meet in the eighth square. Good-bye.

(The Queen disappears.)

ALICE: Your Majesty? She's disappeared. The eighth square and I shall be a Queen. Well. Here I am in the second square. I must get through the third square...by railway, she said.

(A white shawl blows onstage. Puzzled, Alice goes to it. The WHITE QUEEN hurries on, looking for it.)

(Offering the shawl:) I'm very glad I was in the way of it.

(The White Queen stares at her, then whispers "bread-and-butter, bread-and-butter" over and over again as she steps away.)

Hmmm.

(Alice approaches the White Queen.)

Excuse me. 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.

ALICE: If your Majesty will tell me the right way to go about it—

WHITE QUEEN: *(Struggling with the shawl:)* I've been a-dressing myself for the past two hours.

ALICE: *(Helping her:)* You've got everything crooked. 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 think. 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. 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: Come, you look rather better now! But really you should have a lady's maid.

WHITE QUEEN: I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure! Two pence a week, and jam every other day.

ALICE: (*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!

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. AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

(Alice fairly jumps out of her skin as the White Queen screams.)

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!

(The Queen fiddles with the brooch, which comes undone. The Queen grasps at it wildly.)

ALICE: Take care! You're holding it all crooked! Oh! There, now you've done it. You've pricked your finger.

WHITE QUEEN: That accounts for the bleeding, you see. Now you understand the way things happen here.

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?

(There is a SNORING noise. The Queen and Alice turn.)

Ah, the flowers have fallen asleep. It's almost time for the train.

ALICE: The train! Oh, I must take the train to the fourth square.

WHITE QUEEN: I will wait with you. How old are you?

ALICE: Seven and a half, exactly.

WHITE QUEEN: You needn't say "exactly." I can believe it without that. Now I'll give you something to believe. I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day.

ALICE: (*Laughing:*) I can't believe that!

WHITE QUEEN: Can't you? Try again: draw a long breath and shut your eyes.

ALICE: There's not use trying. One can't believe impossible things.

WHITE QUEEN: I daresay you haven't had much practice. When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast!

(The Queen makes a sound like a train whistle. Alice looks quizzically at her.)

The train's coming.

(An actual TRAIN WHISTLE is heard.)

Oh dear. Do I look all right? Is everything pinned correctly? Have I told you everything? The fourth square! The fourth square belongs to—

ALICE: Tweedle...something.

WHITE QUEEN: Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They will ferry you across the wabe.

ALICE: The what?

WHITE QUEEN: The wabe. Very swampy and slithy. Oh, there's something else to tell you.

(The train arrives. The CONDUCTOR appears. It is played by the actor who played the White Rabbit.)

CONDUCTOR: All aboard!

ALICE: Aren't you –

CONDUCTOR: No time! No time! All aboard! Tickets!

WHITE QUEEN: Oh, your ticket, my dear!

(Queen hurriedly gives her a train ticket, and the shawl comes undone again, falling away.)

Oh dear!

CONDUCTOR: Tickets please! Hurry! No time!

WHITE QUEEN: *(Going after the shawl!)* Go, my dear! I will see you in the eighth square!

(Alice gives her ticket to the Conductor and begins to board.)

Oh! My dear, my dear!

(Alice stops, much to the Conductor's annoyance.)

I remembered! Beware the Jabberwock, my child!

(A distant ROAR.)

ALICE: What did you say? Did you say – ?

WHITE: The frumious Bandersnatch! Take care, take care!

CONDUCTOR: No time!

ALICE: But – what do you know about – ?

(The Conductor all but hauls Alice aboard, and the train whistle sounds. The stage goes dark. PROJECTIONS: Train moving, smoke, whistles. Lights up on a swampier area, shadowy. TWEEDLEDEE and TWEEDLEDUM appear from opposite sides, each looking over their respective shoulder. Their movements are synchronized, but they are not aware of each other. They appear to be trying to sneak away from someone. Eventually they end up center, and lock eyes.)

DUM AND DEE: Oh. You.

DUM: I suppose you think you're clever.

DEE: I suppose you think YOU'RE clever.

DUM: Not at all.

DEE: Contrariwise.

DUM: Must you?

DEE: Oh, stop.

DUM: Bah.

DEE: Hmmph.

(They stick their tongues out at each other, then turn back to back and cross their arms.)

DUM: Well.

DEE: On the other hand.

DUM: Once you give the matter some thought.

DEE: I've had time to reconsider.

DUM: Shall we?

DEE: Let's!

DUM: Ha ha!

DEE: Yes!

(They shake hands, then stand with arms around each other's shoulders. They grin and freeze. Alice enters.)

ALICE: Such a strange train. Leaving me off in the middle of a wood. Why couldn't I have just ridden the train to the eighth square, I'm sure I don't—OH.

(She sees the Tweedles. They are like statues. She creeps closer to them, comes close to touching them.)

DUM: If you think we're wax-works, you ought to pay, you know. Wax-works weren't made to be looked at for nothing. Nohow!

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

ALICE: I'm sure I'm very sorry. You were both so still.

DUM: How is that a crime?

DEE: More people should be still.

ALICE: Your collars—DEE and DUM. Oh! Tweedledee and Tweedledum, I presume.

DEE: Indeed.

DUM: The same.

ALICE: Then this must be the fourth square. And I understand you can help me across the fifth?

DUM: The fifth.

DEE: Nasty place.

ALICE: Your names. I've heard your names before. In a rhyme.

DUM: Oh brother.

DEE: Yes?

(Dum cuffs Dee with his hat.)

ALICE: Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle;
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

DUM: I had forgotten about my rattle.

(The twins break their stance.)

ALICE: Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel.

DUM: *(To Alice:)* And I know what you're thinking about, but it isn't so, nohow.

DEE: Contrariwise, if it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic.

ALICE: I was thinking, which is the best way out of this wood? It's getting so dark. Would you tell me, please?

(There is a GROWLY SOUND. Alice freezes.)

Are there any lions or tigers about here?

Want to read the entire script? Order a perusal copy today!