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ALICE IN WONDERLAND

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ALICE IN WONDERLAND

written by
Lewis Carroll

adapted by
Léo Woodland

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Synopsis

A faithful adaptation of Lewis Carroll's classic fairy-tale fantasy. It is suitable for all ages but the size of the cast (some of whom can play more than one role and some of whom are silent) makes it ideal for schools and other large groups.

Cast of Characters

Several roles are minor and two are silent. Doubling would be easy. All but Alice can be played by girls or boys.

ALICE	
WHITE RABBIT	
MOUSE	
DUCK	
DODO	
LORY	
MAGPIE	
EAGLE	
CANARY	
CATERPILLAR	
PIGEON	
FOOTMAN	
DUCHESS	
COOK	
CHESHIRE CAT	
MARCH HARE	
HATTER	
DORMOUSE	
FIVE	
SEVEN	
KING	
QUEEN	
GRYPHON	
MOCK TURTLE	
SISTER	
CRAB	non-speaking
BLACKBIRD	non-speaking
COURTIERS	general crowd scene

Props

Scene 1

A book
Bottle with label
Fan
Gloves

Scene 2

Cookies
Thimble
Mushroom
Hookah
Scroll

Scene 3

Cauldron and other kitchenware
Baby
Table laid for tea
Pocketwatch

Scene 4

Rose bush with white and red flowers
Paint pots and brushes
Huge playing cards
Three giant flower pots
Model flamingoes and hedgehogs

Scene 5

Wig
Trumpet
Teacup
Slice of bread-and-butter
Paper with words of poem
Tarts on table
General scrap paper to throw

ACT 1

Scene 1

Setting: The curtain is drawn.

At Rise: ALICE sits to one side of the stage with her legs dangling. She is reading a book.

ALICE *(sighing)*

Really, what is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?

(She puts down the book and looks around.)

It really is the silliest of books. The sort my sister would read. I'd be better off making daisy chains.

(She looks around for flowers.)

(WHITE RABBIT runs from the back of the auditorium.)

WHITE RABBIT

Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!

ALICE

Did I really see a rabbit? With a waistcoat and a pocket watch?

WHITE RABBIT

Oh my silk waistcoat! Oh my whiskers! I am so late.

(He runs in front of the closed curtain and then through it.)

ALICE

This really is so bizarre. Enough with this book. I shall follow him down his hole.

(ALICE stands and nervously steps through the gap in the curtain. She screams.)

ALICE

I'm falling, I'm falling.

*(**FX:** a loud thump as in ALICE landing)*

(The curtain opens enough to see ALICE.)

ALICE

Well, after such a fall as this, how brave they'll all think me at home. I wonder how many miles I've fallen. I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think — yes, that's about the right distance — but then I wonder what latitude or longitude. I don't know what they are, latitude and longitude, but they're such grand words, aren't they?

(Pause.)

I wonder if I shall fall right *through* the earth. How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think… I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand or Australia?

(She curtseys.)

No, she'll think what an ignorant little girl I am for asking. Perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere. Oh I do wish Dinah was with me. Cats understand these things. Dinah, my dear, I wish you were down here with me. There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder?

(ALICE becomes sleepy.)

Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats? Do bats eat cats? Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?

*(**FX:** a loud thump as ALICE lands again.)*

(ALICE falls to the ground. The curtain opens to reveal her wonderland. Stage right is surrounded by doors. Stage left is in darkness, separated by a wall of doors. One door is much smaller than the others, covered by a curtain, but ALICE doesn't see it. She tries all the large doors, but they are locked.)

ALICE

However shall I get out of here? And who will give Dinah her milk?

(She walks around the stage again and finds a medicine bottle on the table. She picks it up and looks at the label.)

ALICE *(reading)*

Drink me! How very curious.

(She takes a long drink and sinks to all fours. Crawling across the stage, she finds a small door covered by a curtain.)

But it's so tiny. Even if my head would go through, it would be of very little use without my shoulders. But what a curious feeling! I must be shutting up like a telescope. But let me see…

(She draws the curtain and crawls through the door to stage left. She enters a garden.)

(Enter WHITE RABBIT, running.)

WHITE RABBIT

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

(WHITE RABBIT runs off stage.)

ALICE

Which way? Which way?

(Pause.)

This really does feel so odd.

(She tests her head with her hands.)

Am I smaller? Or am I a normal size again? So many strange things have happened that I'm really not quite certain. And…

(She rises to her feet and looks down.)

Curiouser and curiouser. Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Goodbye, feet! I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears. I'm sure *I* shan't be able! I shall be a great deal too far off to trouble myself about you: you must manage the best way you can. But I must be kind to them, or perhaps they won't walk the way I want to go. Let me see: I'll give them a new pair of boots every Christmas.

(She starts to cry but stops at the entry of the WHITE RABBIT carrying a fan and white gloves.)

WHITE RABBIT

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

ALICE

If you please, sir…

(WHITE RABBIT is startled, drops the gloves and fan and runs off stage; ALICE picks up the fan and gloves and fans herself.)

ALICE

(absently putting on the rabbit's gloves):

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? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? I'm sure I'm not Ada. Her hair goes in

ALICE (CONT)

such long ringlets. I can't be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she knows such a very little! I'll try all the things I used to know. London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome — no, that's wrong. I must've changed into Mabel. I'll have to go and live in that poky little house, and have next to no toys to play with, and oh! ever so many lessons to learn.

(Enter the MOUSE. ALICE does not notice.)

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.

(ALICE notices the Mouse.)

Oh Mouse, do you know the way out?

(MOUSE looks curiously but says nothing.)

ALICE

Perhaps it doesn't understand English. I daresay it's a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror. *Où est ma chatte?*

(MOUSE leaps and shakes in fright.)

MOUSE

Not like cats! Would *you* like cats if you were me?

ALICE

Well, perhaps not. And yet I wish I could show you Dinah. She is such a dear quiet thing, and she's such a capital one for catching mice — oh, I beg your pardon. We won't talk about her any more.

MOUSE

We indeed! As if I would talk on such a subject! Our family always *hated* cats: nasty, low, vulgar things! Don't let me hear the name again!

ALICE

Are you — are you fond — of — of dogs? There is such a nice little dog near our house. A little bright-eyed terrier, you know, with oh, such long curly brown hair! And it kills all the rats and…

(MOUSE walks away.)

ALICE

Oh dear! I've offended it again. Mouse, dear, do come back again, and we won't talk about cats or dogs either, if you don't like them.

(MOUSE returns. Enter DUCK, DODO, LORY, MAGPIE, EAGLET, CANARY, CRAB and BLACKBIRD.)

ALICE

Oh my goodness, and who are you?

(Curtain falls.)

Scene Two

Setting: The curtain rises. The whole stage is now the garden.

At Rise: ALICE, MOUSE, DUCK, DODO, LORY, MAGPIE, EAGLET, CANARY, CRAB and BLACKBIRD all stand in the garden.

LORY

I am a lory.

ALICE

But what is a lory?

LORY

You should know such things. I am older than you, and must know better.

MOUSE

Sit down, all of you, and listen to me! Silence all round, if you please! William the Conqueror, whose cause was favoured by the pope, was soon submitted to by the English, who wanted leaders, and had been of late much accustomed to usurpation and conquest. Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria...

LORY

Ugh!

MOUSE

I beg your pardon! Did you speak?

LORY

Not I.

MOUSE

I thought you did. I proceed. Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, declared for him: and even Stigand, the patriotic archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable...

DUCK

Found what?

MOUSE

Found *it*. Of course you know what 'it' means.

DUCK

I know what 'it' means well enough, when *I* find a thing. It's generally a frog or a worm. The question is, what did the archbishop find?

MOUSE

...found it advisable to go with Edgar Atheling to meet William and offer him the crown. William's conduct at first was moderate. But the insolence of his Normans…

EAGLET

Speak English! I don't know the meaning of half those long words, and, what's more, I don't believe you do either.

(The others laugh between themselves.)

DODO

The best thing we could do is to have Caucus-race. The best way to explain it is to do it. Follow me.

(DUCK walks off in no set pattern and the others follow, then begin running wherever they choose.)

DODO

The race is over!

ALICE

But who has won?

(DODO sits with one finger pressed on its forehead)

DODO

Everybody has won, and we must all have prizes.

EAGLET

And who is to give the prizes?

DODO

She is, course.

(They rise and surround ALICE, pointing: Prizes! Prizes!)

(ALICE, confused, pulls sweets [candy] from her pocket and hands one to each of them.)

MOUSE

But she must have a prize herself, you know.

DODO

Of course. What else have you got in your pocket?

ALICE

Only a thimble.

DODO

Hand it over here.

(ALICE hands him the thimble. DODO presents it back to her.)

DODO

We beg your acceptance of this elegant thimble.

(They all cheer.)

ALICE

(Confused but turning to MOUSE)

You promised to tell me your history, you know, and why it is you hate — C and D.

MOUSE *(sighing)*

Mine is a long and a sad tale.

ALICE

(looking at MOUSE's tail)

It *is* a long tail, certainly, but why do you call it sad?

MOUSE *(severely)*

What are you thinking of? You insult me by talking such nonsense.

ALICE

You're so easily offended. Please come back and finish your story!

ALL OTHERS

Yes, please do

ALICE

I wish I had our Dinah here. She'd soon fetch it back.

LORY

And who is Dinah, if I might venture to ask the question?

ALICE

Dinah's our cat. And she's such a capital one for catching

ALICE (CONT)

mice. And oh, I wish you could see her after the birds. Why, she'll eat a little bird as soon as look at it.

(DUCK MAGPIE, EAGLET, CANARY and BLACKBIRD react in alarm and prepare to leave the stage.)

MAGPIE

I really must be getting home; the night-air doesn't suit my throat.

CANARY

Come away. It's high time you were all in bed.

(They walk off stage, leaving ALICE alone.)

(Enter WHITE RABBIT looking anxious.)

WHITE RABBIT

The Duchess! The Duchess! Oh my dear paws! Oh my fur and whiskers! She'll get me executed, as sure as ferrets are ferrets. Where *can* I have dropped them?

(ALICE begins searching for the fan and gloves, WHITE RABBIT notices ALICE)

WHITE RABBIT

Mary Ann, what *are* you doing out here? Run home this moment, and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan! Quick, now!

(ALICE, frightened, runs to the edge of the stage.)

ALICE *(to herself)*

He took me for his housemaid. How surprised he'll be when he finds out who I am! But I'd better take him his fan and gloves - if I can find them.

(She leaves the stage as WHITE RABBIT continues to search before also leaving the stage. ALICE returns with the fan and gloves and a bottle. She looks at it curiously and drinks a mouthful.)

ALICE

I know *something* interesting is sure to happen. I do hope it'll make me grow large again, for really I'm quite tired of being such a tiny little thing.

(ALICE stretches to make herself taller.)

That's quite enough. I do wish I hadn't drunk quite so much.

(Enter CATERPILLAR. He carries a mushroom and a hookah, puffs on the hookah and gazes at ALICE.)

CATERPILLAR *(sleepily)*

And 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 been 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 some day, you know — and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?

CATERPILLAR

Not a bit.

ALICE

Well, perhaps your feelings may be different. All I know is, it would feel very queer to *me*.

CATERPILLAR

You! Who are *you*?

ALICE

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

CATERPILLAR

Why?

(ALICE turns away.)

CATERPILLAR

Come back! I've something important to say.

(ALICE turns and comes back.)

CATERPILLAR

Keep your temper.

ALICE

Is that all?

CATERPILLAR

No.

(Pause)

So you think you're changed, do you?

ALICE

I'm afraid I am, sir; I can't remember things as I used - and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together.

CATERPILLAR

Can't remember *what* things?

ALICE

Well, I've tried to say "How doth the little busy bee" but it all came different.

CATERPILLAR

Repeat, "You are old, Father William".

ALICE

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
  "And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
  Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
  "I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
  Why, I do it again and again."

ALICE (CONT)

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

CATERPILLAR

That is quite enough. That is not said right.

ALICE

Not *quite* right, I'm afraid; some of the words have got altered.

CATERPILLAR

It is wrong from beginning to end. What size do you want to be?

ALICE

Well, I should like to be a *little* larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind. Three inches is such a wretched height to be.

CATERPILLAR

(drawing itself up to its full height)

It is a very good height indeed. You'll get used to it in time.

(ALICE watches as the CATERPILLAR starts smoking again. It eventually picks up the hookah, leaves the mushroom and starts to leave.)

CATERPILLAR

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

ALICE

One side of *what*? The other side of *what*?

CATERPILLAR

Of the mushroom.

(CATERPILLAR leaves the stage.)

(ALICE gazes at the mushroom.)

ALICE

But it is perfectly round. Which is this side and which is the other?

(ALICE breaks off part of the mushroom and bites it. She reacts in alarm.)

Oh dear, oh dear. My head is disappearing into my feet.

(ALICE breaks off the mushroom at the other side and bites it. She puts the rest in her pocket.)

Oh dear, oh dear. Now my head is disappearing *from* my feet.

(ALICE wanders about the stage in puzzlement, taking huge strides to show her height.)

(Enter PIGEON, beating its wings.)

PIGEON

Serpent!

ALICE

I'm not a serpent! Let me alone!

PIGEON

Serpent, I say again!

(Beat)

I've tried every way, and nothing seems to suit them.

ALICE

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

PIGEON

I've tried the roots of trees, and I've tried banks, and I've tried hedges, but those serpents… there's no pleasing them. As if it wasn't trouble enough hatching the eggs, I must be on the look-out for serpents night and day. Why, 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 wood, and just as I was thinking I should be free of them at last, they must needs come wriggling down from the sky. Ugh, Serpent!

ALICE

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

PIGEON

Well! *What* are you? I can see you're trying to invent something.

ALICE

I'm, I'm a little girl.

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.

PIGEON (CONT)

(Pause.)

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!

(PIGEON leaves the stage with indignant flapping of wings.)

(ALICE remains. She nibbles the mushroom pieces alternately, one moment growing taller, the next coming back to normal size.)

(Enter a fish dressed as a FOOTMAN. He draws an enormous ceremonial letter from under his arm.)

FOOTMAN

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

(Coughs in embarrassment and reads again.)

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

(Curtain falls.)

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Scene Five

Setting: A court room with two thrones and a table.

At Rise: The KING and QUEEN are on the thrones, surrounded by the whole cast. Many of them are busy writing. The KING wears a judge's wig over his crown. The KNAVE is in chains. The WHITE RABBIT holds a trumpet in one hand and a scroll of parchment in the other. The table is full of tarts.

ALICE

So this is the trial, though I don't know what for. It is all so very confusing. I wish they'd get it done so we can start on the tarts.

(Looking at the KING)

That must be the judge, because of his wig. And all the others, I suppose they are the jurors.

(To the GRYPHON.)

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

GRYPHON

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

WHITE RABBIT

Silence in court!

(The KING jumps in alarm and looks round to see who is talking.)

KING

Herald, read the accusation!

(WHITE RABBIT blows three blasts on the trumpet and unrolls the scroll.)

WHITE 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.

KING

Consider your verdict!

WHITE RABBIT

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

KING

Call the first witness!

WHITE RABBIT

First witness!

The HATTER stands before the KING with a teacup in one hand and a slice of bread in the other. He wears a hat. Behind him stands the MARCH HARE, arm-in-arm with the DORMOUSE.

HATTER

I beg 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.

MARCH HARE

Fifteenth.

DORMOUSE

Sixteenth.

KING

Write that down.

(Everyone makes notes.)

Take off your hat.

HATTER

It isn't mine.

KING

Stolen!

(The CAST gasps.)

HATTER

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

(The QUEEN stares at the HATTER, who fidgets.)

KING

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

(The HATTER is scared and nervously tries to bite his teacup instead of the bread.)

HATTER

I'm sorry, your Majesties. It's just that I feel so nervous, me a humble hatter.

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 begun my tea and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin, and the twinkling of the tea...

KING

The twinkling of the *what?*

HATTER

It *began* with the tea...

KING

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

HATTER

I’m a poor man, and most things twinkled after that, only the March Hare said...

MARCH HARE

I didn’t!

HATTER

You did!

MARCH HARE

I deny it!

KING

He denies it. Leave out that part.

DORMOUSE

Well, at any rate…

(He falls asleep.)

MARCH HARE

What did the Dormouse say?

HATTER

I can't remember.

KING

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

(The HATTER drops his teacup and bread and drops to one knee.)

HATTER

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

KING

You're a *very* poor *speaker*.

(There is laughter, quickly silenced by a glare from the QUEEN.)

KING

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

HATTER

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

KING

Then you may go.

(The HATTER moves to the edge of the court in a hurry.)

QUEEN

And cut his head off outside!

KING

Call the next witness!

(Enter the COOK)

KING

Give your evidence.

COOK

Shan't.

(The KING looks at the QUEEN.)

WHITE RABBIT

Your Majesty must cross-examine this witness.

KING

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

COOK

Pepper, mostly.

DORMOUSE *(sleepily)*

Treacle.

QUEEN

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

(The COURTIERS bundle the DORMOUSE out. The COOK disappears in the confusion.)

KING

Never mind! Call the next witness.

(To the QUEEN)

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

WHITE RABBIT

Call Alice!

(ALICE panics, trips over those near her and falls.)

ALICE

Oh, I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon.

KING

The trial cannot proceed until all the jurymen are back in their proper places.

(Pause.)

What do you know about this business?

ALICE

Nothing.

KING

Nothing *whatever*?

ALICE

Nothing whatever.

KING

That's very important.

(The others write in their books.)

WHITE RABBIT

*Un*important, your Majesty means, of course.

KING

*Un*important, of course, I meant, unimportant – unimportant, unimportant, important… I don't know which sounds best.

(The others start to mumble and write in their books again.)

KING

Silence! Rule Forty-two. All persons more than a mile high to leave the court.

ALICE

I'm not a mile high.

KING

You are.

QUEEN

Nearly two miles high.

ALICE

Well, I shan't go. Besides, that's not a regular rule; you invented it just now.

KING

It's the oldest rule in the book.

ALICE

Then it ought to be Number One.

KING

(to the others)

Consider your verdict.

WHITE RABBIT

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

QUEEN

What's in it?

WHITE RABBIT

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?

WHITE RABBIT

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

(He unfolds the paper.)

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

QUEEN

Are they in the prisoner's handwriting?

WHITE RABBIT

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

KING

He must have imitated somebody else's hand.

HATTER

Please your Majesty, I didn't write it, and they can't prove 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 honest man.

(General applause.)

QUEEN

That *proves* his guilt.

ALICE

It proves nothing of the sort!

KING

Read them.

WHITE RABBIT

Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?

KING

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

WHITE RABBIT *(reading)*

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.

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

White Rabbit (CONT)

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

KING

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

ALICE

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

ALL *(mumbling)*

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

KING

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

(He mutters as he re-reads the verses.)

"I gave her one, they gave him two" — why, that must be what he did with the tarts, you know!

ALICE

But, it goes on 'they all returned from him to you'

KING

(pointing at the tarts on the table)

Nothing can be clearer than *that*. Then again — 'before she had this fit—'. You never had fits, my dear, I think?

QUEEN

Never!

KING

Then the words don't *fit* you…

(He waits for a laugh that doesn't come.)

It's a pun!

(Everybody laughs, fawningly)

KING

Let the jury consider their verdict.

QUEEN

No, no! Sentence first, verdict afterwards.

ALICE

Stuff and nonsense!

QUEEN

Hold your tongue!

ALICE

I won't!

QUEEN

Off with her head!

(The CAST advances on her angrily, throwing papers and shouting.)

(The curtain closes.)

(ALICE comes through the curtain and collapses.)

(Enter her SISTER.)

SISTER

Wake up, Alice dear! Why, what a long sleep you've had!

ALICE

Oh, I've had such a curious dream! I don't even know if it's over.

(The WHITE RABBIT appears at the side of the stage and vanishes. The CHESHIRE CAT and the MAD HATTER appear on the other side, wave and leave.)

QUEEN *(unseen)*

Off with her head!

SISTER

It *was* a curious dream, dear, certainly. But now, run in to your tea; it's getting late.

(They walk off hand in hand.)



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