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Playscripts, Inc.
325 W. 38th Street, Suite 305
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

In order of appearance

WHITE RABBIT
ALICE
SECOND ALICE
OLD SQUIRREL
FISH-FOOTMAN
FROG-FOOTMAN
DUCHESS
COOK
CHESHIRE CAT
MAD HATTER
MARCH HARE
DORMOUSE
CATERPILLAR
FLOWERS (ROSE, TIGER-LILY, and DAISIES)
TWEEDLE DEE
TWEEDLE DUM
WHITE KNIGHT
HUMPTY DUMPTY
GENERAL
GARDENERS (TWO, FIVE, and SEVEN)
KING OF HEARTS
QUEEN OF HEARTS
SOLDIER CARDS
EXECUTIONER
KNAVE OF HEARTS
ALICE'S SISTER
JURY MEMBERS

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

by Jason Pizzarello

ADAPTED FROM LEWIS CARROLL'S
"ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND" AND
"THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS"

(A WHITE RABBIT hurriedly enters running down a darkened tunnel. He is very properly dressed, with a vest, white gloves, and a pocket watch.)

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late. Oh, my ears and whiskers! Oh, my fur! Oh, my dear paws. How late it's getting! Oh, the Queen! The Queen! She will surely get me executed as sure as sure is sure.

(ALICE tumbles in to the same tunnel. She stands and brushes some dirt off her dress.)

ALICE. Oh, what a fall! I'm not hurt, am I? *(Patting herself:)* I don't think so. My, I wonder how many miles I fell down that hole? I must be 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've got to. I wonder if I fell right *through* the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards. I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. *(Curtsies:)* Please, ma'am, is this China or Australia? And what an ignorant little girl she'll think me for asking. No, it'll never do to ask; perhaps I shall see it written somewhere—

(The WHITE RABBIT quickly enters again, running by ALICE. He stops for a moment and pulls out his watch to look at the time.)

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, my paws. Oh, my fur and whiskers! Oh, the Queen, the Queen!

ALICE. Excuse me, Sir—

(The WHITE RABBIT is gone.)

ALICE. What a curious rabbit. Nicely dressed, though. Now, how shall I get out? If only it were not so dark—

(The WHITE RABBIT enters again.)

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, dear, oh dear!

ALICE. There you are again, White Rabbit. Please stop, won't you?

(Before ALICE can run after the WHITE RABBIT, a SECOND ALICE enters, already following him. The WHITE RABBIT drops his gloves.)

SECOND ALICE. Wait, Sir! Oh, Sir—why you dropped your gloves. Sir—

(SECOND ALICE picks up the gloves and runs off.)

ALICE. Excuse me, girl—

(She's gone.)

ALICE. Now, wait a minute. That girl looked an awful lot like Alice. I mean, like me. I'm Alice. But if I'm Alice, who was that? *Another* Alice? Is that possible? How peculiar everything is today!

There must someone who can help me here, someone who can show me the direction home. I'll figure out WHERE I am first. That's most logical.

(A most extraordinary noise is heard going on from inside a house, a constant howling and sneezing, and a great crash, as if a dish has been broken to pieces. ALICE approaches the noise coming from behind a little door. She knocks and knocks. The noise continues and no one answers.)

ALICE. Hello?! Hello? I know someone's there.

(A very OLD SQUIRREL, who was sitting under a tree, gets up and hobbles slowly towards her. He is dressed in bright yellow, and has enormous boots on.)

OLD SQUIRREL. What is it, now?

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

OLD SQUIRREL. Which door?

ALICE. *This* door, of course!

OLD SQUIRREL. To answer the door? What's it been asking of?

ALICE. I don't know what you mean.

OLD SQUIRREL. I talks English, doesn't I? Or are you deaf? What did the door ask you?

ALICE. Nothing! I've been knocking at it!

OLD SQUIRREL. Shouldn't do that—shouldn't do that— Upsets it, you know. You let *it* alone, and it'll let *you* alone, you know.

ALICE. Could you tell me then, where I am exactly? I'm trying to get figure out if—

OLD SQUIRREL. (*Taking out a large acorn:)* Care for a nut?

ALICE. No, no thank you. Sister said I'm not to accept nuts from strange squirrels. Or was it candies from babies. Or—

OLD SQUIRREL. Suit yourself.

(The OLD SQUIRREL hobbles back to his tree, nibbling on his acorn. For a moment or two she stands looking at the house, and wondering what to do next, when suddenly a FISH-FOOTMAN comes running out of the wood and raps loudly at the door. It is opened by ANOTHER FOOTMAN with a round face, and large eyes like a frog; and both FOOTMEN have powdered hair that curls all over their heads.)

FROG-FOOTMAN. State your business.

(The FISH-FOOTMAN produces from under his arm a great letter, nearly as large as himself, and hands it over to the FROG-FOOTMAN.)

FISH-FOOTMAN. For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

FROG-FOOTMAN. From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet.

(They both bow low, and their curls get entangled together. There's a bit of business to free themselves.)

ALICE. Did you hear me knocking? I was knocking for quite some time.

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

ALICE. Please, then, how am I to get in? I wish to see the Duchess.

FISH-FOOTMAN. *(Ignoring her:)* There might be some sense in your knocking, if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were *inside*, you might knock, and we could let you out, you know.

ALICE. *(Louder:)* But how am I to get in?

(The FROG-FOOTMAN and FISH-FOOTMAN sit down.)

FROG-FOOTMAN. We shall sit here, 'til tomorrow—

(At this moment the door of the house opens, and a large plate comes skimming out, straight at the FOOTMEN's heads and breaks to pieces against one of the trees behind them.)

OLD SQUIRREL. *(Suddenly appearing and waving his fist madly in the air:)* Watch it, you!

FISH-FOOTMAN. *(Ignoring the plate:)* —'til tomorrow, or the next day, maybe...

ALICE. *(Still louder:)* Please tell me how to get in!

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

FISH-FOOTMAN. We shall sit here, on and off, for days and days.

ALICE. But what am I to do?

FROG-FOOTMAN. Anything you like.

(The FOOTMEN begin to whistle.)

ALICE. Oh, there's no use talking to either of you. Why, you're perfectly idiotic!

(SECOND ALICE enters and runs right by the FROG-FOOTMAN and FISH-FOOTMAN and into the house. The FOOTMEN barely notice.)

ALICE. I guess you don't need to knock after all...

(ALICE follows SECOND ALICE, past the FOOTMEN, opens the door and goes in. The door leads into a large kitchen. SECOND ALICE is nowhere to be found. The DUCHESS sits on a three-legged stool in the middle, nursing a baby. The COOK leans over the stove, stirring a large cauldron full of soup. A large CAT sits on the rug and grins from ear to ear. ALICE begins to sneeze.)

ALICE. There's certainly too much pepper in that soup!

(The DUCHESS sneezes occasionally as well. The baby sneezes and howls alternately without a moment's pause.)

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

DUCHESS. It's a Cheshire cat, and that's why. (Suddenly, to the baby:) Pig!

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

DUCHESS. They all can, and most of them do.

ALICE. I don't know of any that do.

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

(The COOK takes the cauldron of soup off the fire, and starts throwing everything within her reach at the DUCHESS and the baby--the pots come first; then a shower of saucepans, plates, and dishes. The DUCHESS takes no notice of them even when they hit her. ALICE manages to jump out of the way.)

ALICE. (To the COOK:) Oh, please mind what you're doing!

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

ALICE. Which would not be an advantage, just think of what work it would make with the day and night! You see, the earth takes

twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis—twenty-four hours, I *think*; or is it twelve? I—

DUCHESS. Oh, don't bother *me*, I hate numbers!

(The DUCHESS begins nursing the baby and singing a sort of lullaby. As she does so, she gives it a violent shake at the end of every line.)

DUCHESS.

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

COOK. *(Acting as a chorus:)* Ooo, oohhh, ohhh!

(As the DUCHESS sings she tosses the baby up and down, and the poor little thing howls, so that you can hardly hear the words.)

DUCHESS.

*“I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes;
For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases!”*

COOK. Ooo, oohhh, ohhh!

DUCHESS. *(Flinging the baby to ALICE:)* Here! You may nurse it a bit, if you like! I must go and get ready to play croquet with the Queen.

(As the DUCHESS hurries out of the room, the COOK throws a frying-pan after her, barely missing. ALICE holds on to the baby with some difficulty, as it snorts like a steam-engine, and keeps doubling itself up and straightening itself out again. ALICE manages to carry it outside.)

ALICE. *(To the baby:)* Now, if I *don't* take you away with me, they're sure to kill you in a day or two: wouldn't it be murder to leave you behind?

(The baby grunts.)

ALICE. Don't grunt, that's not at all a proper way of expressing yourself.

(The baby grunts again.)

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

(The baby grunts even louder. ALICE undoes the baby's blanket to reveal that it is, in fact, a pig. ALICE, quite alarmed, sets the creature down. The pig trots away.)

ALICE. Curiouser and curiouser...

(The CHESHIRE CAT appears sitting on a bough of a tree. It has a large grin, very long claws and a great many teeth, yet appears to be gentle.)

ALICE. Cheshire Cat, would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

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

ALICE. I don't much care where—

CHESHIRE CAT. Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

ALICE. —so long as I get *somewhere*...

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

ALICE. What sort of people live about here?

CHESHIRE CAT. *(Waving its right paw:)* In *that* direction, lives a Hatter: and in *that* direction, *(Waving the other paw)* lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad.

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

CHESHIRE 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?

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

ALICE. And how do you know that you're mad?

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

ALICE. I call it purring, not growling.

CHESHIRE 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.

CHESHIRE CAT. You'll see me there...

(The CHESHIRE CAT vanishes. And then suddenly appears again.)

CHESHIRE CAT. By-the-bye, what became of the baby? I'd nearly forgotten to ask.

ALICE. It turned into a pig.

CHESHIRE CAT. I thought it would...

(The CHESHIRE CAT vanished again. ALICE waits a moment, expecting it to return, but it doesn't. She considers which way to go.)

ALICE. *(To herself:)* I've seen hatters before. The March Hare will be much the most interesting, and perhaps as this is May it won't be raving mad—at least not as mad as it was in March.

(The CHESHIRE CAT appears again. ALICE is slightly startled.)

CHESHIRE CAT. 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.

CHESHIRE CAT. All right.

(This time the CHESHIRE CAT vanishes quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remains some time after the rest of it has gone.)

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 my life! *(Looking around:)* Now, which way did he say to go again?

(SECOND ALICE exits from the Duchess's house, with the pig in the blanket just as ALICE did before. ALICE watches her. After

SECOND ALICE *realizes the baby is a pig, and lets it go, she runs after it. ALICE follows SECOND ALICE and finds a table set out under a tree.*)

(The MARCH HARE and the MAD HATTER are having tea at it, and a DORMOUSE is sitting between them, fast asleep. The other two use it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. The table is a large one, but the three are all crowded together at one corner of it. ALICE sits down at the table.)

MAD HATTER / MARCH HARE. No room! No room!

ALICE. There's *plenty* of room!

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

MAD HATTER. Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE. You should learn not to make personal remarks. It's very rude.

MAD HATTER. Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

ALICE. 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.

MAD 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. (*Half-sleeping:*) You might just as well say, that “I breathe when I sleep” is the same thing as “I sleep when I breathe”!

MAD HATTER. It *is* the same thing with you.

(The MAD HATTER takes a giant watch out of his pocket, and looks at it uneasily, shaking it and holding it to his ear.)

MAD HATTER. What day of the month is it?

ALICE. The fourth.

MAD HATTER. Two days wrong! (*Looking angrily at the MARCH HARE:*) I told you butter wouldn’t suit the works!

MARCH HARE. It was the *best* butter.

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

(The MARCH HARE takes the watch and dips it into his cup of tea, and looks at it again.)

MARCH HARE. It was the *best* butter, you know.

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

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

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

MAD HATTER. Which is just the case with *mine*.

ALICE. I don’t quite understand you.

MARCH HARE. The Dormouse is asleep again.

(The MARCH HARE pours a little hot tea upon its nose. The DORMOUSE shakes its head impatiently.)

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

MAD HATTER. (*To ALICE.*) Have you guessed the riddle yet?

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

MAD HATTER. I haven't the slightest idea.

MARCH HARE. Nor I.

DORMOUSE. Nor I.

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

MAD 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.

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

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

MAD 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!

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

MAD 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?

MAD 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. I’ve heard something like it.

MAD HATTER. It goes on, you know, in this way:

*“Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle-”*

*(The DORMOUSE begins singing in its sleep “Twinkle, twinkle,
twinkle, twinkle...”.)*

MAD 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!

MAD 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?

MAD 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?

MAD HATTER. Exactly so, as the things get used up.

ALICE. But what happens when you come to the beginning again?

MARCH HARE. *(Yawning:)* Suppose we change the subject, I’m getting tired of this. I vote the Dormouse tells us a story.

MAD HATTER. Wake up, Dormouse!

MARCH HARE. Wake up, Dormouse!

(They pinch it on both sides at once. The DORMOUSE slowly opened its eyes.)

DORMOUSE. I wasn’t asleep. I heard every word you were saying.

MARCH HARE. Tell us a story!

ALICE. Yes, please do!

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

DORMOUSE. Once upon a time...

(The DORMOUSE falls fast asleep, face down into a pot of tea.)

ALICE. He's asleep!

MAD HATTER. Wake up!

MARCH HARE. Wake up!

(The HATTER and the HARE pinch the DORMOUSE until he awakes.)

DORMOUSE. ...And they lived happily ever after. Goodnight.

(The DORMOUSE is asleep again.)

MAD HATTER. What a wonderful story!

MARCH HARE. The ending's my favorite!

MAD HATTER. I like the beginning.

ALICE. But there wasn't a middle!

MARCH HARE. Take some more tea.

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

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

ALICE. Nobody asked *your* opinion.

MAD HATTER. Who's making personal remarks now?

(ALICE doesn't know what to say to this: so she helps herself to some tea and bread-and-butter, and then turning to the DORMOUSE—)

ALICE. But what happened in the story?

MAD HATTER. I want a clean cup, let's all move one place over.

(The MAD HATTER moves one place, and the DORMOUSE follows him. The MARCH HARE moves into the DORMOUSE's

place, and ALICE takes the place of the MARCH HARE. The MAD HATTER is the only one who gains any advantage from the change.)

ALICE. *(Speaking as she moves:)* But I don't understand why we're moving places. Really, I don't think—

MAD HATTER. Then you shouldn't talk!

(ALICE gets up in great disgust.)

ALICE. Why, this is the rudest tea-party I've ever been to in all my life!

(ALICE is about to walk away when SECOND ALICE sits down at the other end of the table.)

MAD HATTER / MARCH HARE. No room! No room!

(SECOND ALICE is frightened by this outburst and runs away.)

ALICE. No, wait! Don't be shy! There's plenty of room.

(ALICE runs off after her. The DORMOUSE falls asleep instantly, and the MARCH HARE and the MAD HATTER, not noticing ALICE, attempt to put the DORMOUSE back in the teapot. ALICE runs into a very high narrow wall. She notices HUMPTY DUMPTY sitting with his legs crossed, on the top.)

ALICE. You look exactly like an egg!

HUMPTY. It's very provoking, to be called an egg—VERY!

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

HUMPTY. Some people, have no more sense than a baby!

ALICE.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the King's horses and all the King's men,

Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again...

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

ALICE. My name is Alice, but—

HUMPTY. It's a stupid enough name! What does it mean?

ALICE. *Must* a name mean something?

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

ALICE. Why do you sit out here all alone?

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

ALICE. Don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground? This wall is so *very* narrow...

HUMPTY. What tremendously easy riddles you ask! Of course I don't think so! Why, if ever I *did* fall off—which there's no chance of—but *if* I did—*if* I did fall, the King has promised me—with his very own mouth—to—to—

ALICE. To send all his horses and all his men?

HUMPTY. Yes, all his horses and all his men, they'd pick me up again in a minute, they would! However, this conversation is going on a little too fast: it's my turn to choose a subject— So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?

ALICE. Ten years and six months.

HUMPTY. Wrong! You never said a word like it!

ALICE. I though you meant "How old *are* you?"

HUMPTY. If I'd meant that, I'd have said it. Ten years and six months... An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said "Leave off at ten"—but it's too late now.

ALICE. I never ask advice about growing.

HUMPTY. Too proud?

ALICE. I mean, that one can't help growing older.

HUMPTY. *One* can't, perhaps, but *two* can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at ten.

ALICE. What a beautiful belt you've got on! At least, a beautiful cravat, I should have said—no, a belt, I mean—I beg your pardon!

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

ALICE. I know it's very ignorant of me.

HUMPTY. It's a cravat, child, and a beautiful one, as you say. It's a present from the King and Queen. There now!

ALICE. Is it really?

HUMPTY. They gave it to me, for an un-birthday present.

ALICE. What *is* an un-birthday present?

HUMPTY. A present given when it isn't your birthday, of course.

ALICE. I like birthday presents best.

HUMPTY. You don't know what you're talking about! How many days are there in a year?

ALICE. Three hundred and sixty-five.

HUMPTY. And how many birthdays have you?

ALICE. One.

HUMPTY. And if you take one from three hundred and sixty-five, what remains?

ALICE. Three hundred and sixty-four, of course.

HUMPTY. That *seems* to be done right—though I haven't time to see it done properly on paper just now. Anyhow that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents—

ALICE. Certainly.

HUMPTY. And only *one* for birthday presents, you know.

ALICE. You seem very clever, Sir, but I really must be going—

HUMPTY. Do as you wish. Good-bye.

ALICE. Good-bye, 'til we meet again!

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

ALICE. The face is what one goes by, generally.

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

ALICE. It wouldn't look very nice.

HUMPTY. Wait 'til you've tried.

(HUMPTY returns to his position on the wall as ALICE walks away.)

ALICE. Of all the unsatisfactory people I've ever met—

(No sooner than ALICE leaves the wall, a heavy crash shakes the forest from end to end. The next moment SOLDIERS come running through, at first in twos and threes, then it seems like a whole army. ALICE gets behind a tree, for fear of being run over, and watches them go by. Then horses run by in a stampede of galloping. A GENERAL enters, riding on a toy horse.)

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

ALICE. Yes, I did, several thousand, I should think.

GENERAL. The King sent four thousand two hundred and seven, that's the exact number. He couldn't send all the horses, you know, because two of them are wanted in the croquet game. And I haven't sent the two messengers, either. They've both gone into town. Just look along the road, and tell me if you can see either of them.

ALICE. I see nobody on the road.

GENERAL. I only wish I had such eyes, to be able to see Nobody! And at that distance, too! Why, I can hardly see real people in this light!

ALICE. I don't suppose you know where the Queen is today?

GENERAL. The Queen's that way. What do you want to see the Queen for?

ALICE. Well, I don't know her, you see—

GENERAL. That's clear enough, otherwise you wouldn't want to see her.

ALICE. It's just that I'm trying to get home and—

(The GENERAL has galloped away. ALICE walks up to a large flower-bed, with a border of daisies, and a tree growing in the middle. A TIGER-LILY is waving gracefully about in the wind.)

ALICE. O Tiger-lily, I wish you could talk!

TIGER-LILY. We can talk, when there's anybody worth talking to.

ALICE. *(Almost in a whisper:)* And can *all* the flowers talk?

TIGER-LILY. As well as *you* can, and a great deal louder.

ROSE. It isn't good manners for us to begin, you know, and I really was wondering when you'd speak! 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.

TIGER-LILY. 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 out here, with nobody to take care of you?

ROSE. There's the tree in the middle, what else is it good for?

ALICE. But what could it do, if any danger came?

DAISY 1. It says "Bough-wough!" That's why its branches are called boughs!

DAISY 2. Didn't you know *that?!*

(The DAISIES begin shouting together, until the air is full of little shrill voices.)

TIGER-LILY. Silence, every one of you! *(Waving itself passionately from side to side, and trembling with excitement:)* They know I can't get at them, or they wouldn't dare to do it!

ALICE. (*Stooping down to the DAISIES, who are beginning to shout again:.*) If you don't hold your tongues, I'll pick you!

(*The DAISIES fall silent.*)

TIGER-LILY. That's right! The daisies are worst of all. When one speaks, they all begin together, and 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.

TIGER-LILY. Put your hand down, and feel the ground, then you'll know why.

(*ALICE does.*)

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

TIGER-LILY. 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*.

TIGER-LILY. Hold your tongue! As if *you* know what's going on in the world more 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—

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

ROSE. Well, she has the same awkward shape as you.

TIGER-LILY. Her petals are tumbled about like yours, too.

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. When did you see her here?

ROSE. Well, there's already been two of you today, so I daresay you'll see another one soon, I'm sure.

ALICE. But when she left here—do you recall which way she went?

TIGER-LILY. Where did you come from and where are you going anyway?

ALICE. I seem to have lost my way I'm afraid.

ROSE. I don't know what you mean by *your* way, all the ways about here belong to the Queen.

TIGER-LILY. If I remember the last one of you went down that way towards Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee.

ALICE. Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee? You mean like the poem?

ROSE. You know it don't you?

TIGER-LILY / ROSE.

*"Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee
 Aagreed to have a battle;
 For Tweedle Dum said Tweedle Dee
 Had spoiled his nice new rattle.
 Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
 As black as a tar-barrel;
 Which frightened both the heroes so,
 They quite forgot their quarrel."*

(Two fat little SCHOOL BOYS appear, standing under a tree, each with an arm round the other's neck. One of them has "DUM" embroidered on his collar, and the other "DEE." ALICE approaches them slowly and they remain still. She moves to check the back of their collars to see if it says "TWEEDLE.")

TWEEDLE DUM. *(Suddenly:)* 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!

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

ALICE. I'm sure I'm very sorry.

TWEEDLE DUM. I know what you're thinking about, but it isn't so, nohow.

TWEEDLE 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 these woods? Would you tell me, please?

TWEEDLE DUM. You've been wrong! The first thing in a visit is to say "How d'ye do?" and shake hands!

(TWEEDLE DUM and TWEEDLE DEE each hold out a hand to shake hands with her. For fear of hurting the other one's feelings ALICE takes hold of both hands at once.)

ALICE. It would never do to say "How d'ye do?" *now*: we seem to have got beyond that, somehow!

TWEEDLE DUM. Nohow. And thank you very much for asking.

(We hear something that sounds like a wild beast coming from the woods near them.)

ALICE. Are there any lions or tigers about here?

TWEEDLE DEE. It's only the White Knight snoring.

TWEEDLE DEE / TWEEDLE DUM. Come and look at him!

(They each take one of ALICE's hands, and lead her up to where the WHITE KNIGHT is sleeping. He has a tall red night-cap on, with a tassel, and he is lying crumpled up into a sort of untidy heap, and snoring loudly.)

TWEEDLE DUM. Isn't he a *lovely* sight? Fit to snore his head off!

ALICE. I'm afraid he'll catch cold lying on the damp grass.

TWEEDLE DEE. He's dreaming now, and what do you think he's dreaming about?

ALICE. Nobody can guess that.

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

ALICE. Where I am now, of course.

TWEEDLE DEE. Not you! You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!

TWEEDLE DUM. If that there Knight was to wake, you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!

ALICE. I shouldn't! Besides, if *I'm* only a sort of thing in his dream, what are *you*, I should like to know?

TWEEDLE DUM. Ditto.

TWEEDLE DEE. Ditto, ditto!

ALICE. Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise.

TWEEDLE DUM. Well, it's no use you're talking about waking him, when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real.

ALICE. (*Beginning to cry:*) I *am* real!

TWEEDLE DEE. You won't make yourself a bit realler by crying. There's nothing to cry about.

ALICE. If I wasn't real, I shouldn't be able to cry.

TWEEDLE DUM. I hope you don't suppose those are real tears?

ALICE. I know you're talking nonsense, and it's foolish to cry about it. I really better be getting out of the woods, for it's growing rather dark. Do you think it's going to rain?

TWEEDLE DUM. No, I don't think it is, at least— (*Pulling out a large umbrella:*) —not under *here*. Nohow.

ALICE. But it may rain *outside*?

TWEEDLE DEE. It may—if it chooses, we've no objection. Contrariwise.

(*TWEEDLE DUM springs out from under the umbrella and seizes ALICE by the wrist.*)

TWEEDLE DUM. Do you see that?

(*TWEEDLE DUM points with a trembling finger at a small white thing lying under a tree.*)

ALICE. It's only a rattle. Not a rattlesnake, you know. Only an old rattle—quite old and broken.

TWEEDLE DUM. I knew it was! (*Beginning to stamp about wildly and tear his hair:*) It's ruined, of course!

ALICE. You needn't be so angry about an old rattle.

(*TWEEDLE DEE hides under the umbrella.*)

TWEEDLE DUM. But it isn't old! (*Becoming furious:*) It's new, I tell you—I bought it yesterday—my nice *NEW RATTLE!*

(*TWEEDLE DEE tries his best to fold up the umbrella, but he can't quite succeed, and ends up rolling over, bundled up in the umbrella, with only his head out.*)

TWEEDLE DUM. (*To TWEEDLE DEE:*) Of course you agree to have a battle?

TWEEDLE DEE. (*Crawling out of the umbrella sulkily:*) I suppose so, only *she* must help us to dress up, you know.

(*TWEEDLE DEE and TWEEDLE DUM go off, and return with their arms full of things--such as blankets, floor-rugs, table-cloths, dish-covers and saucepans.*)

TWEEDLE DUM. I hope you're a good hand at pinning and tying strings? Every one of these things has got to go on, somehow or other.

(*TWEEDLE DUM and TWEEDLE DEE bustle about attempting to wear the quantity of things they've brought. ALICE attempts to help them, tying strings and fastening buttons...*)

ALICE. Really you'll be more like bundles of old clothes than anything else, by the time you're ready!

TWEEDLE DEE. (*Handing her a dish cloth:*) Please tie this securely 'round my neck.

ALICE. What for?

TWEEDLE DEE. To keep my head from being cut off, what else? You know, it's one of the most serious things that can possibly happen to one in a battle—to get one's head cut off.

(*ALICE fixes TWEEDLE DUM's saucepan helmet.*)

TWEEDLE DUM. Do I look very pale?

ALICE. (*Gently:*) Well—yes—a little.

TWEEDLE DUM. I'm very brave generally, only today I happen to have a headache.

TWEEDLE DEE. And *I've* got a toothache! I'm far worse off than you!

ALICE. Then you'd better not fight today.

TWEEDLE DUM. We *must* have a bit of a fight; I don't care how long it lasts. What's the time now?

TWEEDLE DEE. Half-past four.

TWEEDLE DUM. Let's fight 'til six, and then have dinner.

TWEEDLE DEE. Very well, and *she* can watch us—only you'd better not come too close. I generally hit everything I can see—when I get really excited.

TWEEDLE DUM. And I hit everything within reach, whether I can see it or not!

ALICE. You must hit the trees pretty often, I should think.

TWEEDLE DUM. I don't suppose there'll be a tree left standing, by the time we've finished!

ALICE. And all about a rattle!

TWEEDLE DUM. I shouldn't have minded it so much, if it hadn't been a new one.

ALICE. (*To herself:*) I wish the monstrous crow would come already and frighten them both away!

TWEEDLE DUM. (*To DEE:*) There's only one sword, you know, but you can have the umbrella—it's quite as sharp. Only we must begin quick. It's getting as dark as it can.

TWEEDLE DEE. And darker.

ALICE. It's so dark, there must be a thunderstorm coming on. Look what a thick black cloud that is! And how fast it comes! Why, I do believe it's got wings!

TWEEDLE DUM. It's the crow!

TWEEDLE DEE. It's the crow!

(TWEEDLE DEE and TWEEDLE DUM run and hide. ALICE decides to run, too. She comes upon a CATERPILLAR, sitting calmly on top of a mushroom.)

CATERPILLAR. Who are *you*?

ALICE. *(A bit startled:)* Who am I?

CATERPILLAR. YES. 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 since then.

CATERPILLAR. What do you mean by that? *(Sternly:)* Explain yourself!

ALICE. I can't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, Sir, because I don't feel like myself today, 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. Changing 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 strange, won't you?

CATERPILLAR. Not a bit.

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

CATERPILLAR. You! *(Contemptuously:)* Who are *you*?

ALICE. *(Irritated:)* I think, you ought to tell me who *you* are, first.

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

ALICE. I'm afraid I am, Sir. I don't seem to be the same person is all.

CATERPILLAR. Being one person is overrated. Who do you want to be?

ALICE. Oh, I'm not particular to who, only one should like feel like oneself, you know.

CATERPILLAR. I *don't* know.

(The SECOND ALICE runs by.)

ALICE. There she is!

CATERPILLAR. Who?

ALICE. Alice! I mean, me. I mean, the girl who looks like me.

CATERPILLAR. If you ask me, that girl *is* you.

ALICE. But if she is me, then who am I?

(The CATERPILLAR yawns once or twice, shake itself, gets down off the mushroom, and crawls away.)

ALICE. Wait, where are you going?

(The CATERPILLAR is gone. ALICE follows where SECOND ALICE ran off and suddenly finds herself in a beautiful garden. A large rose-tree stands near the entrance of the garden: the roses growing on it are white, but there are three GARDENERS at it, busily painting them red. The GARDENERS are large playing cards. ALICE approaches them.)

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

FIVE. I couldn't help it, Seven hit 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. (*Flinging down his brush:*) Well, of all the unjust things—

(They finally notice ALICE, stop what they're doing, and bow.)

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

TWO. (*Quietly:*) Why the fact is, you see, Miss, this here ought to have been a *red* rose-tree, and we put a white one 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 three GARDENERS instantly throw themselves flat upon their faces. There's a sound of marching, and then some SOLDIERS enter in single file; they're all shaped like the three gardeners, oblong and flat, with their hands and feet at the corners. The WHITE RABBIT enters talking in a hurried nervous manner, smiling at everything that's said. The KNAVE OF HEARTS enters next, tied in chains. Last of all come the KING and QUEEN OF HEARTS. The QUEEN stops when she sees ALICE. Everyone else stops after her.)

QUEEN. (*Severely:*) Who is this? What's your name, child?

ALICE. My name is Alice, your Majesty.

QUEEN. (*Pointing to the GARDENERS:*) And who are *these*?

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

QUEEN. (*With sudden beast-like fury:*) Off with her head! Off—

ALICE. Nonsense!

(The QUEEN is shocked, then starts to huff and puff.)

KING. (*To the QUEEN:*) Consider, my dear: she is only a child!

QUEEN. (*To the SOLDIERS:*) Turn them over!

(The SOLDIERS turn the GARDENERS over.)

QUEEN. Get up!

(The three GARDENERS instantly jump up, and begin bowing to the KING, the QUEEN, the SOLDIERS, and everybody else.)

QUEEN. Stop that! You make me giddy. (*Turning to the rose-tree:*) What *have* you been doing here?

TWO. (*Going down on one knee:*) May it please your Majesty, we were trying—

QUEEN. (*Further examining the roses and noticing the paint:*) I see! Off with their heads!

(The procession moves on, except for a couple of SOLDIERS who remain behind to execute the GARDENERS, who run to ALICE for protection.)

ALICE. Don't worry, you won't be beheaded!

(ALICE manages to hide them, and the SOLDIERS wander about looking for them, and then quietly march off after the others.)

QUEEN. Are their heads off?

SOLDIERS. Their heads are gone, if it please your Majesty!

QUEEN. That's right! Come on, then!

(The QUEEN and ALICE rejoin the procession. The WHITE RABBIT walks by ALICE.)

WHITE RABBIT. It's—it's a very fine day!

ALICE. Very. Why is the Knave of Hearts in chains?

WHITE RABBIT. Hush! Hush! He's under sentence of execution.

ALICE. What for?

WHITE RABBIT. He stole the Queen's tarts—

ALICE. Is that all?!

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, hush! The Queen will hear you! You see, they were missing, and the Queen loves her tarts and—

QUEEN. Get moving!

ALICE. (*Back to the WHITE RABBIT:*) Where are we going anyway?

WHITE RABBIT. The trial, of course.

ALICE. I thought croquet.

WHITE RABBIT. Not anymore.

(The WHITE RABBIT joins the rest of the party, who begin to set up for court. The KING and QUEEN of HEARTS are seated on their throne. The KNAVE OF HEARTS is standing before them, in chains, with a SOLDIER on each side to guard him; and near the KING is the WHITE RABBIT, with a trumpet in one hand, and a scroll of parchment in the other. There are also JURY MEMBERS [may be comprised of actors not in the court scene] who can be on or off-stage. If they are seen, they can react to the action in the court and take notes. In the very middle of the court is a table, with a large dish of tarts upon it.)

KING. Here!, here! *(He puts on his spectacles and looks anxiously around, to see who's talking:)* Silence in the court! Herald, read the accusation!

(The WHITE RABBIT blows three blasts on the trumpet, and unrolls the parchment scroll, and read as follows:)

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. *(To the JURY:)* 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 MAD HATTER enters with a teacup in one hand and a piece of bread-and-butter in the other. The MARCH HARE and DORMOUSE follow close behind.)

MAD 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?

MAD HATTER. *(Looking to the MARCH HARE for confirmation:)* Fourteenth of March, I *think* it was.

MARCH HARE. Fifteenth.

DORMOUSE. Sixteenth.

KING. *(To the JURY:)* Write that down. *(To the MAD HATTER:)* Take off your hat.

MAD HATTER. It isn't mine.

KING. *(To the JURY:)* Stolen!

MAD HATTER. Not stolen. I keep them to sell. I've none of my own. I'm a hatter.

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

(This of course makes the MAD HATTER more nervous, and he bites a large piece out of his teacup instead of the bread-and-butter.)

QUEEN. Give your evidence, or I'll have you executed, whether you're nervous or not.

MAD HATTER. *(Almost trembling, now:)* I'm a poor man, your Majesty, —and I hadn't begun my tea—not above a week or so—and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin—and the twinkling of the tea—

KING. The twinkling of the what?

MAD HATTER. It began with the tea.

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

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

MARCH HARE. I didn't!

MAD HATTER. You did!

MARCH HARE. I deny it!

KING. *(To the JURY:)* He denies it. Leave out that part.

DORMOUSE. Well, at any rate—

(He falls asleep:)

MAD HATTER. After that, I cut some more bread-and-butter—

KING. But what did the Dormouse say?

MAD HATTER. That I can't remember.

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

(The MAD HATTER drops his teacup and bread-and-butter, and bends down on one knee.)

MAD HATTER. I'm a poor man, your Majesties—

KING. You're a very poor speaker. If that's all you know about it, you may stand down.

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

KING. Then you may *sit* down.

MAD HATTER. I'd rather finish my tea.

KING. You may go.

(The MAD HATTER hurriedly leaves the court, without even waiting to put his shoes on.)

QUEEN. *(To the EXECUTIONER:)* —and just take his head off outside.

(The EXECUTIONER turns, but the MAD HATTER is gone.)

KING. Call the next witness!

(The next witness is The DUCHESS's COOK, who enters carrying the pepper-box in her hand. People in the court sneeze as she walks by.)

KING. Give your evidence.

COOK. Shan't.

(The KING is unsure what to do now and turns to the WHITE RABBIT for help.)

WHITE RABBIT. *(Quietly:)* Your Majesty must cross-examine the witness.

KING. Well, if I must, I must. (*In a deep voice, to the COOK:)* What are tarts made of?

COOK. Pepper, mostly.

DORMOUSE. (*Waking up suddenly:)* Twinkle, twinkle, little bat...!

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

(There is some confusion, as everyone tries to remove the DORMOUSE. The CHESHIRE CAT appears near ALICE, but only its head.)

ALICE. Cheshire Cat!

CHESHIRE CAT. How are you getting on?

ALICE. They're dreadfully fond of beheading people here; the great wonder is, that there's any one left alive!

CHESHIRE CAT. How do you like the Queen?

ALICE. Not at all. She's so extremely—

(The KING notices the CHESHIRE CAT's head.)

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. Then it must be removed! (*To the QUEEN:)* My dear, I wish you would have this cat removed!

QUEEN. (*Without taking much notice:)* Off with his head!

KING. (*To the EXECUTIONER:)* Off with his head at once. Queen's orders!

EXECUTIONER. You can't cut off a head unless there is a body to cut it off from.

KING. Anything that has a head can be beheaded. Don't talk nonsense.

EXECUTIONER. I've never had to do such a thing before, and I'm not going to begin at *this* time of life.

QUEEN. If something's not done about it in less than no time, I'll have everybody executed!

EXECUTIONER. In that case...

(The EXECUTIONER tries to approach the CHESHIRE CAT, but its head fades away.)

EXECUTIONER. Now it disappeared. I certainly can't behead a head that's not here.

KING. Never mind! Call the next witness!

(The WHITE RABBIT fumbles over the list, then reads out:)

WHITE RABBIT. Alice!

ALICE. *(To herself:)* Me? Why would I be called?

SECOND ALICE. *(Upon entering:)* Here!

(SECOND ALICE takes the stand.)

KING. What do you know about this business?

SECOND ALICE. Nothing.

KING. Nothing *whatever?*

SECOND ALICE. Nothing whatever.

KING. *(To the JURY:)* That's very important.

WHITE RABBIT. UNimportant, your Majesty means, of course.

KING. *(To the JURY:)* UNimportant, of course, I meant. *(To himself:)* important—unimportant—unimportant—important— Silence! *(To the JURY:)* Consider your verdict!

WHITE RABBIT. There's more evidence to come yet, please your Majesty, and 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.

QUEEN. Who is it directed to?

WHITE RABBIT. It isn't directed at all. In fact, there's nothing written on the outside. (*Unfolding the paper as he speaks:*) It isn't a letter, after all: it's a set of verses.

KING. Is it in the prisoner's handwriting?

WHITE RABBIT. No, it's not, and that's the strangest thing about it.

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

KNAVE. Please your Majesty, you must believe my innocence. I don't even care for tarts. (*To the JURY:*) I'm a bread and butter man, myself. Besides I didn't write the letter, and you 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.

(There's a general clapping of hands at this.)

QUEEN. That *proves* his guilt.

ALICE. It proves nothing of the sort! Why, you don't even know what it's about!

KING. Who are you?

ALICE. I'm Alice.

SECOND ALICE. *I'm* Alice.

KING. Rule Forty-two. "No more than one of each person and/or creature in the court at any given time. All persons in duplicate are to leave the court immediately."

(Everybody looks at ALICE.)

ALICE. I'm not in duplicate. I'm the only Alice.

SECOND ALICE. Me, too!

KING. You are—

QUEEN. —Clearly in duplicate.

ALICE. Well, I won't go, at any rate. 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.

WHITE RABBIT. (*Putting on his spectacles:*) Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?

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

WHITE RABBIT.

“ They told me you had been to her,

And mentioned me to him:

She gave me a good character,

But said I could not swim.

I gave her one, they gave him two,

You gave us three or more;

They all returned from him to you,

Though they were mine before.

My notion was that you had been

(Before she had this fit)

An obstacle that came between

Him, and ourselves, and it.”

KING. (*Rubbing his hands:*) That's the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet, so now let the jury—

ALICE. I don't believe there's an ounce 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 it, after all. “—SAID I COULD NOT SWIM—” (*To the KNAVE:*) you can't swim, can you?

KNAVE. Do I look like it?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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