

# **ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND**

Adapted for the stage by Jarryd Bendall

From the works of Lewis Carroll

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# ACT I

## ACT I, SCENE I – DOWN THE RABBITHOLE

**Alice, Alice's Sister, White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat**

### FRONT OF CURTAIN

**Enter Alice, Alice's Sister**

Sister: Time for maths, I think, Alice. Recite your times tables.

Alice: Fine. One one is one. Two ones are two. Three ones are-

Sister: The one's times tables? Really Alice?

Alice: I thought I would start with the ones, and once I was reasonably good at them, I would move on to the harder ones. But I don't think I'm quite there yet, you see, dear sister. Why, I haven't even got to one times one thousand yet. The mind boggles!

Sister: Are you going to be sarcastic all day?

Alice: No

Sister: Good.

Alice: Aha! I was being sarcastic there as well. I tricked you quite thoroughly. Not so clever now, are you, dear sister.

Sister: Alice, it is about time you started being a little serious about your lessons. Otherwise you will just talk childish nonsense for the rest of your life, and no one will take you seriously. In fact, they will get rather frustrated with you, like I am now. Can't you see that I am only trying to help you?

Alice: If I ever wanted your help, I believe I would ask for it. Your help is boring. Lessons are boring. It's such a beautiful day. There shouldn't be any lessons when the sun is out like this. Why, there should be adventures instead! Me and Dinah want to go play by the river.

Sister: Dinah and I.

Alice: There you go, correcting me again! Do you ever stop?

Sister: I will stop when you get it correct.

Alice: Besides, Dinah doesn't want to play with you. She is my cat, and only wants to play with me.

Sister: I never said-

Alice: Yes you did, you said "Dinah and I".

Sister: Oh you know what I mean to say Alice.

Alice: Then you should say what you mean.

Sister: I do, but it is awfully annoying when you try and turn my words around like that.

Alice: Good. Then you know how annoying you are when you try and make me correct all the time.

Sister: (Sigh) Perhaps you could practice some reading?

Alice: But what use are books, if they don't have any pictures in them?

Sister: They are grown up books. It's what nice young ladies read.

Alice: I don't want to grow up!

Sister: Would you rather grow down?

Alice: Oh I am sure you think you are quite funny with that one, don't you, dear sister.

Sister: Can't you just study a little, Alice? And then you can go and play all you like.

Alice: I did study, last night. Father taught me some new riddles. I was quite good at them, there was only one I couldn't get!

Sister: Riddles aren't proper learning, Alice. Studies are learning to read and write properly, to speak correctly and to do multiplication.

Alice: But I don't want to learn numbers and grammer. I have other questions, which are far more important. Like, why is the sky blue during the day, but black during the night? Why do I come back down when I jump, instead of just floating away like a leaf? And why is that rabbit wearing a waistcoat?

### **Enter White Rabbit.**

Sister: Alice, I'm sure if you would only read your books, they would have all the answers to those questions. I will, however, give you the answer to the last one, free of charge. Rabbit's most definitely do not wear waistcoats.

Alice: Why sister, that one most definitely does! And look, now he is checking a pocket watch!

Sister: Alice, come along and stop this nonsense at once! I know you want to get out of lessons, but this is a little beyond believable. Perhaps I will read to you for a while. At least that way I can pretend to myself that you might be learning something.

**Exit Sister.**

Rabbit: No time, no time!

Alice: Excuse me.

Rabbit: You are excused. Have we met before?

Alice: I don't believe so.

Rabbit: Well I don't have time to meet properly now. I'm late! Late late late!

**Exit White Rabbit.**

Alice: How curious. Why, what could a Rabbit possibly be late for? Wait! Oh my!

**Alice follows Rabbit behind curtain.**

### CURTAIN

*On stage. There is a sign “To Tweedledum’s House” on the far right of stage of stage pointing right, and the sign “To the House of Tweedledee” is on the far left of stage pointing left. Effectively, they are both pointing off stage. The Cheshire Cat is sitting on stage.*

Alice: Why, after such a fall as that, I shall think nothing of tumbling down the stairs. I wouldn't say a thing, even if I fell off the roof of a house! How brave they shall think me at home! Home... Oh dear. I have no idea where I am now. I wonder if I am close to falling all the way through to the other side of the earth, where people walk with their heads on the ground and their feet in the air. Or maybe I have only just reached the centre of the earth. That certainly was a long way down.

Cat: Unless you were falling sideways.

Alice: (Scared) Who said that?

Cat: Nobody said “that”. I did, however say, “unless you were falling sideways”.

Alice: Was I falling sideways?

Cat: No, you were falling down ways, for sure. It was a silly suggestion by me. No one can fall sideways. Oh, I guess you can be blown sideways, by the wind or something. But you weren't being blown were you. Anyway, it doesn't matter now, I guess, because you aren't falling anymore.

Alice: Aren't I? Oh, yes, I am standing on solid ground now. Good. I thought that was going to go on forever and ever and never stop! Now, who has been speaking to me all this time?

Cat: That was me.

Alice: Oh! I thought you were just a cat. You are just a cat!

Cat: Yes.

Alice: A talking cat?

Cat: Last time I checked. Oh, s'pose I just proved it then, didn't I.

Alice: I suppose you did.

Cat: You are a little girl?

Alice: Yes. Alice.

Cat: All ice? Careful, you'll melt pretty easy.

Alice: No. Alice. My name is Alice.

Cat: Alice the girl. Ok. Pleased to meet you.

Alice: Do you shake hands upon meeting a cat?

Cat: No, definitely not, to be sure. I am only a talking cat, not a handshaking cat. We have only just met and you are demanding a lot of me.

Alice: Oh, sorry! Sorry. I didn't know the rules about talking cats.

*Cat laughs and holds out his hand. Alice shakes timidly.*

Alice: What is your name?

Cat: I don't s'pose I have one. Never needed one, you see? People just call me Cat. That is what I am, a Cat, and so that is what people call me.

Alice: Then I shall call you Cat too, so I avoid confusion.

Cat: Well if you are going to do that, I shall call you girl, because that is what you are.

Alice: That seems fair. Do you know where I am, Cat?

Cat: You are in front of me.

Alice: Well, I could tell that.

Cat: Do you always ask for second opinions, then?

Alice: No, I mean, where would you say you are then? I would suppose I am in the same place.

Cat: I don't know where I am, really. I am lost.

Alice: Oh dear. Can I help?

Cat: Not unless you can tell me where **I** am, so that I know where that is in relation to where I want to be. I imagine it will be hard for you, though, to tell me where I am, considering you don't know where you are.

Alice: Why, you are correct. I can't tell you that, I am lost as well.

Cat: I would say, I suppose, that you are somewhere near me, then. You are somewhere near lost, but not quite entirely at lost, yet, I think. That is the best answer I can give you, for now.

Alice: Well, that makes me feel a little better at least. Although it is not much of an answer at all.

Cat: I'll try to do better. I s'pose, in a general sense, if you'd like to know, you are in the Land.

Alice: Do you mean on land? For clearly I am not at sea.

Cat: No, I mean, the Land. Capital L. That's what we call this place, we that live here. We all have a house somewhere in the Land.

Alice: But which land, I wonder.

Cat: Another word for wonder is speculate. Did you know that? It's called a synonym. Maybe you're in SpeculateLand.

Alice: It doesn't exactly roll off the tongue.

Cat: Pretty ineffective tongue, if things are just rolling off it. Maybe you should try some glue on your tongue. Or thorns. Both those things are real good at sticking other things to things, if you know what I thing.

Alice: Mean?

Cat: Well I didn't think I was, but I can try being a touch nicer.

Alice: (Laughs). No no, I didn't mean...

Cat: You didn't mean to mean to be mean?

Alice: I said it wrong. Sorry. I know what you think. What sort of people live in this Land, then?

Cat: All sorts. Every sort. For example, in that direction lives Tweedledum. And in that direction lives Tweedledee. Visit either you like, they're both as mad as each other.

Alice: I'd rather not go amongst mad people, if I can at all avoid it.

Cat: Oh, well, you can't avoid it. Everybody is mad here. Me especially.

Alice: You?

Cat: Yes, yes, quite mad. If everyone else is definitely mad, which they are, and I thought I was the last sane one left, which I do, then that most certainly makes me the maddest of the lot. Contrariwise, if I simply thought everyone else was mad, when in fact they weren't, I would still be crazy for thinking as such. So either way, I am mad.

Alice: That doesn't seem like much proof.

Cat: Maybe you're just looking at it the wrong way. Consider it this way; you would agree that a dog is not mad, yes?

Alice: Agreed. All the dogs I have encountered seem perfectly sane. Although none of them talk. So I suppose it is unreasonable to think that a talking cat follows the same rules as a not-talking dog.

Cat: Not at all. I might be mad, but I'm not illogical, that would be ridiculous! Now, you would say that a dog growls when it is angry, and wags its tail when it is pleased.

Alice: I would say that, yes.

Cat: Well, cat's growl when they are pleased, and wag their tails when they are angry. And I, being a cat, do these things, you see. Therefore, compared to the quite sane dog, which you agreed to earlier, I am ridiculously mad.

Alice: Well that seems to make sense, and yet, it doesn't in the least! You are certainly not mad, and I am even less mad than you!

Cat: You sure aren't, girl. You must of been mad, to come to a place like this.

Alice: That is not a good reason at all. I came here quite by accident!

Cat: In any case, you are getting angry, which is another meaning for mad. So there.

Alice: Well it is no surprise when you keep talking nonsense.

Cat: It'd be fairly inconsistent of me to stop and start talking nonsense, wouldn't it. And I am a very consistent cat. If I were to have a name, it would be consistent, I should think. What sort of accident?

Alice: I fell down a rabbit hole. Well, I suppose I didn't really. I was chasing a rabbit you see. Oh! A white rabbit! With a waistcoat, and a pocket watch! He was in quite a rush. Have you seen him go past? I was awful curious to see where he was going.

Cat: First of all, that doesn't sound like an accident to me. Sounds like you deliberately went down the rabbit hole. And that is most definitely the actions of a person who is mad. What made you think that a girl, even one so small as you, could fit down a rabbit hole?

Alice: Have you seen the White Rabbit or not?

Cat: Not.

Alice: (Miserable) Why then, my adventure is foiled before it has even begun! I am stuck down here, reportedly amongst mad people of every shape and size. I have no idea where I am, and no way of getting home.

Cat: What are you going to do then?

Alice: What can I do?

Cat: What would you like to do?

Alice: I would awfully like to catch up with that Rabbit. But I don't know which way he went. So I don't much care where I go now.

Cat: Then it ain't gonna matter which way you take there.

Alice: So long as I get somewhere.

Cat: Oh you're sure to do that. If only you walk for long enough. But even if you only jump to the left, then a step to the right, why, I suppose you've got somewhere else, compared to where you started. You've also started to shake your tail feather a little.

Alice: I don't have any tail feathers.

Cat: No? I guess that counts out a few creatures you could've been.

Alice: Well then. Which way would you suggest. Mr. Tweedledee, or Mr. Tweedledum? They both sound silly. But I suppose I should not judge them without having met them.

Cat: I suggest Tweedledee. He seems to be the cleverer of the two. Perhaps if you go after him, and I will go visit Tweedledum, and we can compare notes at a later date.

Alice: You're not coming with me?

Cat: Something wrong with your legs?

Alice: No. I don't think so. Do they look wrong?

Cat: Apart from the fact that you only have two of them. But if they work, you don't need me to carry you, girl, and I'm not one to guide you all over the place. Adventures are more fun when you figure it all out for yourself.

Alice: An adventure? Would you say I am on one now then?

Cat: Yeah, sure, whatever you want to call it. Some might call it wandering around a spooky forest on your own for days and days with no chance of being found. Some might call that a pretty stupid idea. But me and you, we can call it an adventure, ok.

Alice: An adventure. Why, it sounds like quite a bit of fun, when you pitch it as an adventure.

Cat: Alright then. Enjoy yourself girl. Try not to get lost.

Alice: More lost. Seeing as I am already lost, I cannot possibly get lost again.

Cat: Good point. In which case, try not to get found.

Alice: I shant. No doubt if my sister found me, she would want to start with lessons again. And that would bring my adventure to a very quick end.

Cat: Sounds dismal. I'll catch you around girl.

Alice: Until then, Cat!

**Exit Cat.**

Alice: An adventure. Yes. Much, much better than lessons, I should think. And I even have a cat with which to replace Dinah! This should be quite fun indeed. Alice's adventure in speculate-land.

**Exit Alice.** CURTAIN

## **ACT I, SCENE II – TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE**

### **Alice, Tweedledum, Tweedledee, The Sleeping King, White Rabbit**

*On stage. The sign of “To Tweedledum’s House” is now on the far left of stage pointing right, and the sign “To the House of Tweedledee” is on the far right of stage pointing left. Effectively, they are both pointing to the middle of the stage, where at the back stand Tweedledum and Tweedledee as still as statues. Variously there are trees etc, under one of which lies the Sleeping King. There is also a pile of armour and the umbrella somewhere discreetly on stage.*

### **CURTAIN**

#### **Enter Alice.**

Alice: (Seeing the signs) Why that tricky cat. I wonder where he is, I should box his ears. Either road would have led me to the same place anyway. Although I wonder what such a place is.

*She notices Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and goes over to inspect them cautiously.*

Dum: If you think we’re wax-works, you ought to pay you know. Wax-works weren’t made to be looked at for nothin’, no way, no how!

Dee: Contrariwise, if you think we’re alive, you ought to speak to us.

Alice: (Shocked) Oh! You can talk!

Both: (Shocked) Ah! She can talk!

Alice: (Laughs) Well we’ve given each other quite a fright then haven’t we.

Dum: I wasn’t frightened.

Dee: Yeah you was.

Dum: Nah I wasn’t.

Dee: Yeah you was!

Alice: It doesn’t matter.

Dee: (To Alice) Yeah it does.

Dum: (To Dee) Nah it doesn’t!

Alice: Boys! Please stop bickering.

Dee: What’s your name?

Dum: Is it Tweedledee?

Dee: That's my name stupid head.

Dum: My name is not stupid head, my name is Tweedledum.

Dee: You are still a stupid head.

Dum: Nah I isn't!

Dee: Yes, you is.

Dum: Maybe her name is Sally.

Dee: 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, that is.

Alice: My name is not Sally.

Dee: Well you've done this backwards ways! You should've introduced yourself first, shake hands second, frighten us third.

Dum: But we won't be frightened, not a second time, no way, no how!

Dee: Maybe we should introduce ourselves first, and her second?

Dum: Good idea. (To Dee) I am Tweedledum.

Dee: (To Dum) Tweedledee I am.

Dum: Pleased to meet you.

Dee: To meet you, very pleased!

Dum: You look just like me.

Dee: Nah, you look just like me!

Dum: Who's your friend?

Dee: Not my friend. Yours I thought.

Dum: Hmmmm.

Dee: Hmmmm.

Alice: My name is Alice.

Both: Alice!

*They both offer to shake at the same time. She grabs both their hands by crossing her arms, then they cross their arms to shake each others hands, and the trio spin around in a circle.*

Dum: Well the meeting is done.

Dee: And the shaking.

Dum: And the frightening.  
Dee: But not again.  
Dum: No, not again.  
Dee: What next?  
Dum: Games!  
Dee: Yes games! What shall we play?  
Dum: How about statues?  
Dee: An excellent game!

*They return to their starting positions and stand quite still, unblinking, exactly the way Alice found them to begin with.*

Alice: Well we seem to have gone around in circles. I suppose I shall just continue on my way.  
Both: No!  
Dum: You can't leave just yet!  
Dee: Not after we've just met!  
Dum: We must find some other way to entertain her.  
Dee: She didn't seem to like playing statues very much.  
Dum: Maybe because she wasn't very good at it.  
Dee: She did move a lot.  
Dum: And blink.  
Dee: A terrible statue.  
Dum: But quite a good human girl.  
Dee: Quite good indeed.  
Dum: What else can we show her?  
Dee: I got it! The sleeping king!  
Dum: The sleeping king! I got it!  
Dee: No, I got it first of all.  
Dum: No, I got it, and gave it to you.  
Dee: You liar!  
Alice: The sleeping king?

Both: The sleeping king!  
Dum: Come look!  
Dee: Yes, and poke him with a stick!  
Alice: Poke him? How cruel!  
Dee: I didn't say that. Not with a stick. How cruel.  
Dum: You did say it but.  
Dee: You're a butt.  
Dum: Your mum is a butt.  
Dee: We have the same mum! I'm telling her you said that.  
Dum: She will think you said it.

*The sleeping king is slumped up against a tree somewhere, wearing pyjamas, quite asleep, snoring loudly. The brothers take Alice by a hand each, drag her over and present him to her proudly.*

Dum: Look!  
Dee: A king!  
Dum: Sleeping!  
Dee: Snoring his head off!  
Dum: Except it is still on.  
Dee: Yes, it is. And wearing a silly hat.  
Alice: I wonder what he is dreaming about.  
Both: You!  
Dum: And what do you suppose what happen if he stopped dreaming about you.  
Where would you be then, huh?  
Alice: Why I would be right here I suppose.  
Dee: No way, no how! You'd be nowhere! You're only a sort of thing in his dreams.  
Dum: What would happen if he woke up do you reckon? You'd go out, bang! just like a candle.  
Dee: Candles don't go bang.  
Dum: Yeah they do.  
Dee: Nuh uh. They go (*makes some sort of flame noise/movement with body.*)

Dum: What on earth was that?

Dee: That was a candle noise.

Alice: I am not just in his dreams! And even if I were, what does that make you then?

Both: Candles! *They both run around stage yelling “Bang” as loud and stupidly as possible.*

Alice: Please stop, please! I’m afraid you’ll wake him if you keep up that nonsense!

Dum: What are you afraid of?

Dee: You can’t wake him up.

Dum: You’re just his dream.

Alice: I am real. I am real! *She starts to cry.*

Dee: Hope you don’t think them’s real tears.

Dum: Dream tears they are!

*But Alice sits down to cry, so they eventually calm down. They bring an umbrella over and sit on either side of her with the umbrella open.*

Alice: Is it going to rain?

Dee: No.

Dum: Probably not.

Dee: Maybe.

Dum: Could do.

Dee: Looks likely.

Dum: Yes.

Dee: Certainly will.

Alice: *Laughs amongst her tears.* You two are never serious are you.

Dum: We are!

Dee: Quite often!

Dum: Sometimes.

Dee: Occasionally.

Dum: Not really.

Dee: No, never.

Alice: *Cheered up by now.* So it will rain?

Dum: Not under here.  
Alice: But it could rain?  
Dee: Outside maybe.  
Dum: It may if it chooses.  
Dee: But what do we care?  
Alice: You ought to think about someone other than yourselves for a change. Why I should just leave without even saying-  
Dum: Do you see that!  
Dee: That would be a silly thing to say while you were leaving.  
Alice: Well I wouldn't say that either, I meant-  
Dum: Do you see that! Over there, by the sleeping king!  
Dee: No, don't see that. Nothing there.  
Dum: Wasn't talking to you! Wasn't talking to you!  
Alice: Do I see what? That rattle?  
Dum: Yes! Thought so!

*Tweedledum runs over to the sleeping king and picks up a rattle, holding it quite accusingly. Alice comes over to investigate. Tweedledee tries to ignore the whole thing, hiding underneath the umbrella.*

Alice: It is just a rattle. Old and broken.  
Dum: Not old! Not old! Not old yesterday!  
Alice: Well it looks quite old.  
Dum: Spoilt of course.  
Alice: (Catching on) Oh, I'm sure your brother wouldn't do something like this.  
Dee: I would though.

*Tweedledum rushes over to where Tweedledee is trying to hide.*

Dum: Said what?  
Dee: I would though.  
Dum: Thought so.

*Alice moves between to try and prevent any violence.*

Alice: Now why would you do that? That's very mean.

Dee: Well, he said I couldn't play with it. So I said he couldn't play with it neither. So I broke it. That's logic, that is.

Dum: You agree to a battle, of course?

Dee: Can I say no?

Dum: No.

Dee: Spose' I will battle then, yes.

Dum: You must help us get ready Alice.

*They rush off to where a great big pile of equipment is stored, and start to strap on various ridiculous instruments – saucepans for helmets, cushions as body armour.*

*Tweedledee puts on a scarf.*

Dee: This will stop from getting my head cut off. Worst thing to happen in a battle, getting my head cut off.

Dum: Nuh uh. Getting your body cut off would be worse.

Alice: Getting your body cut off from what?

Dum: Your head.

*Alice helps Tweedledum put on his helmet.*

Dum: Do I look scared?

Alice: A little bit, yes. You don't have to fight if you don't want to.

Dee: He still has to fight, though.

Dum: I'm still gonna fight. Only, I have a headache, so I might lose today.

Dee: Well I have the flu, so I might lose more.

Dum: Well I have a broken leg, so I might lose the most!

Dee: Well I have two broken legs!

Alice: If you had two broken legs, you couldn't stand up.

*Tweedledee considers this for a while, then falls over quite seriously. Tweedledum then also falls over so as not to be outdone.*

Dum: Are you ready for battle?

Dee: Yes.

Dum: Ok. But what is the time?

Dee: About five.

Dum: How do you know?

Dee: I am making it up.  
Dum: Ok, we will fight until six then.  
Dee: And then stop for dinner?  
Dum: Yes, then stop for dinner.  
Dee: Good, cos I would not fight then cos I would be quite hungry.  
Dum: Me too.  
Dee: There is only one sword.  
Dum: Then I will take the umbrella. It is quite pointy.  
Dee: Right well don't poke me with it cos that would hurt.  
Dum: Well don't hit me with your sword because that will hurt too.  
Dee: Agreed.  
Dum: Agreed.

*They circle each other without fighting, while Alice watches on in bemusement.*

*Enter the White Rabbit, hurridley.*

Rabbit: Late late late.  
Alice: White Rabbit! I thought I had lost you!  
Rabbit: The only thing lost is time while talking to you. I really would love to make your acquaintance, except I wouldn't, as I have some very important things to do.

*He brushes past Alice. She calls after him and follows.*

**Exit White Rabbit, Alice.**

Dee: Your friend is leaving.  
Dum: Not my friend, yours.  
Dee: No, was not.  
Dum: Yeah, it was.  
Etc until-

CURTAIN

## ACT I, SCENE III - THE CATERPILLAR

**Alice, White Rabbit, Caterpillar, Flower 1, Flower 2, Flower 3**

FRONT OF CURTAIN

**Enter Alice, White Rabbit.**

Rabbit: No time! No time! Oh my paws, I will be executed if I am late, as sure as ferrets are ferrets!

Alice: Excuse me. White Rabbit?

Rabbit: No time! No time! Why do you keep bothering me!

Alice: Why, I was simply wondering where you were off too in such a hurry. There is no need to be rude.

Rabbit: Wondering? This isn't the land for that, my dear, no no! Go someplace else, where you will be much less of an inconvenience to me.

Alice: Am I really bothering you that much?

Rabbit: That much, and some more much, and the rest of the much after that. You are tremendously bothersome, did you know?

Alice: I hadn't been told before, no.

Rabbit: Well I shall tell you thrice more, on behalf of those who have been too polite to tell you before. You are tremendously bothersome, you are tremendously bothersome, you are-

Alice: Yes, I hear you! I had honestly expected better manners from one so well dressed as yourself.

Rabbit: (Taken aback) Well dressed? Do you really think so?

Alice: Why of course. Would I lie to you?

Rabbit: I don't know you, no no, so I can hardly trust you.

Alice: Well, trust me when I say you can trust me.

Rabbit: Oh, no no! I can't trust that I can trust you when you tell me I can trust you when you tell me to trust you! Not at all, no!

Alice: That is too confusing for my head.

Rabbit: Take some time to think about it. Oh, no! Time! No time, no time for me! I must run!

Alice: Wait a moment, won't you please! I cannot keep up with you, you run so awfully fast, and I would awfully like to know where you are going. If you could spare just a moment, please?

Rabbit: (Flattered) Do I really run so fast?

Alice: Nobody runs as fast as.

Rabbit: I should certainly hope not, or else this Nobody person will quickly replace me as the Queen's messenger!

Alice: Is that your job, then?

Rabbit: Among others, yes yes. I always tell her though, she should have two messengers. One for coming, and one for going. Currently I am going, but when I am coming, I will be awfully tired, and that will make me late, and she will be tremendously displeased with me! She might even order my head chopped off!

Alice: She doesn't sound like a very good boss.

Rabbit: No, no, you are quite right. But so said the messenger who came before me. And now I have his job, so...

Alice: Still, if you had two messengers, one for coming and one for going, what would happen once they had come and gone? The one who goes would have to come back to go again, you see?

Rabbit: Well, yes, yes, I see, I do see. So, I suppose, both the messengers would have to be both goers and comers.

Alice: Why, isn't that what you do currently anyway?

Rabbit: (Surprised) Yes! Yes! Of course, I do! Thank you, my dear, thank you for that! Now I must be off. All this new enthusiasm would be wasted if I didn't have a job, so I can't be late. Late! (Checks watch) Oh my paws, I am tremendously late now! My dear, you requested a moment, and you have in fact taken several moments! You have made me late again, you bothersome little dear! No time, no time!

**Exit White Rabbit.**

Alice: Wait! Rabbit! You haven't told me where you're going! Wait! Well that is just great. (She starts to cry). Now stop that Alice, stop that this once.

*In trying to follow the White Rabbit, Alice comes across a simple table, with a tea cup sitting on it. A big label says “Drink Me”.*

Alice: “Drink Me”. Hmmmmmm. Well I am certainly in no hurry to do that. I shall look first, and see whether it is marked “poison” or not. Sister always said that if you drink a bottle marked “poison”, it is probably going to disagree with you at some stage quite soon afterward. Well, I suppose it would not be very sneaky to mark a bottle of poison as poison, or else no one would drink it. But then again, it could be a bottle of poison not marked poison, in which case, it is a very good trick. Well, perhaps I will chance just a little, and if it is poison, a little will not kill me, it will just make me very sick. (She takes a sip). Tastes like...strawberries. Oh my! What a curious sensation! I feel as if I am shutting up just like a telescope.

*The table should magically grow to be taller than Alice, if possible. It is then removed and-*

### CURTAIN

*To one side is the Caterpillar sitting on a toadstool. The three Flowers arranged across the centre of the stage. There should be dense overgrowth setting the rest of the stage, although keep in mind that as Alice has shrunk, all other flowers, trees etc must be much bigger than her.*

### **Enter Alice**

Alice: Well the garden certainly looks rather different from this perspective. I hope no one treads on me. I must be as small as an ant by now!

F1: Smaller.

F2: Quite smaller!

F3: And with less legs.

Alice: Oh! Who is that speaking? Hello?

F1: Hello!

F2: Hello!

F3: Hi! I mean, hello!

Alice: The flowers? Can you talk?

All: Yes!

F1: If there is anyone worth talking to.

F2: Or about (Giggles).

F3: Which is very rare!

Alice: Well this is the first that I have heard of flowers talking. I had no idea! I shall make more of an attempt to hold conversations with you all once I have grown again. Oh dear. How on earth am I going to do that?

F1: Why it's easy!

F2: So long as you have a little bit of sunlight-

F3: And a little bit of water-

F1: You'll grow up big and strong!

F2: Were your parents very tall? Or shorter?

F3: Like tulips? Or shrubs?

Alice: Oh no, my parents are both very tall. I'm not sure I would describe them as either tulips or shrubs though...

F1: What garden do you come from?

Alice: (Laughs) I don't come from any garden.

All: A wildflower!

F1: Why look at her petals, what a peculiar colour.

F2: But she has no fragrance at all, how unfortunate for her.

F3: And those stems! They are so thin! How are they holding her up?

Alice: Why my legs are just fine thank you! They hold me up quite easily. Although they are awful tired from walking.

F1: Perhaps you just need some water.

F2: Or some fertiliser.

F3: Or a visit from the bees!

Alice: But I'm not a flower! None of those things will help.

All: Not a flower?

F1: Why that must mean-

F2: If not a flower then-

F3: She could only be-

All: A weed!

F1: Oh my!

F2: How terrible!

F3: Your parents must be so disappointed!

Alice: I am not a weed either!

F1: Well we wouldn't expect you to admit it.

F2: Even weeds have more sense than that.

F3: Not as much sense as flowers, though.

Alice: If you flowers had any sort of sense, you would realise I am not a weed. I don't even look like a weed! It is very cruel of you to mistake me for one.

F1: Not convinced!

F2: Me either!

F3: Or me!

F1: Perhaps we should ask the caterpillar.

F2: Yes! Yes yes very good idea!

F3: He will know if she is a weed or a flower.

Alice: Who?

All: The Caterpillar!

CP: Over here.

Alice: Oh! A talking cat, and now a talking caterpillar. I really shouldn't be surprised, and yet I can never guess what I might encounter next.

CP: A very strange comment from one claiming not to be a weed. Whooooooooo are yooooooooooooou?

Alice: I hardly know, Mister, just at present. I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.

CP: What on earth do you mean? Explain yourself!

Alice: Well, I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Mister, for you see, I am not myself.

CP: I do not see.

Alice: I wish I were better able to explain, but for me to explain it to someone else, I would first have to understand it all myself.

CP: This is generally the way teachers approach teaching. Although there are some exceptions...

Alice: It is awful difficult to tell if you're taking me seriously or not, Mister.

CP: Why should I take you seriously, when you do not even take you seriously, hmmmmm?

Alice: But I do! I take me very seriously indeed.

CP: Me? Who is me?

Alice: Why, I don't know, Mister. You have not introduced yourself.

CP: Yourself? Perhaps you should focus on explaining you, since you haven't managed to do that yet. Then we can get to me, then finally, to yourself. Then, if I am not too exhausted, I shall explain myself, to you.

Alice: How very frustrating it is to talk to you!

CP: Isn't it just. I have been trying to convince you to explain herself for quite sometime, and she still has not managed it. Perhaps it would be better to try me first.

Alice: Why yes, that seems to me to be a good idea.

CP: How would you know what me thinks is a good idea? You are not me. You are you. Me is me, and I am me.

Alice: I think I have caught on to you now, Mister. Or rather I have caught on to me, correct?

CP: You seem to think you is correct.

Alice: Well then, introduce me, to me. I mean to you. Which is me.

CP: Pay close attention you. Me will introduce me to you. Yes?

Alice: Yes.

CP: Me is a Caterpillar. Who are you?

Alice: You is Alice.

CP: A Lice? Foul little bugs. Although I always thought they were a lot cleverer than you appear to be.

Alice: I dare not argue with you, lest we go around in circles again.

CP: You dare not argue with me, you mean.

F1: Not a weed!

F2: A lice!

F3: A bug!

F1: Bugs are bad.

F2: But some are good.

F3: Like bees!

F1: Or caterpillars.

F2: But she is not either of those bugs

F3: We shall wait.

F1: Wait and see!

F2: Yes! Wait and see.

F3: What kind of bug she is.

Alice: I am not a bug! I am a little girl. My name is Alice.

CP: Are you sure you are Alice? You didn't seem so sure when you first arrived.

Alice: Well, that is true. The problem is, when I woke up this morning, I was much larger than I am now. So I am not sure if I am just a very small version of Alice, or someone new entirely.

CP: You have always been you to me.

Alice: I suppose that makes sense. But to make things even more confusing, the Tweedle's suggested that I was only a sort of thing in a sleeping King's dreams. So I am still quite afraid that if he wakes up, I will not only not be Alice, or not even a small Alice, OR not even some other little girl, but I will be no one! And that would be disastrous.

CP: It wouldn't affect me at all.

Alice: Why that is quite a selfish thing to say. Aren't you worried about me in the least?

CP: Oh I am very worried about me. But not about you.

Alice: Does me know, you thinks me knows what you mean, why does me continue to annoy you with this silly little game!

CP: You makes a good point.

Alice: Well good day to me!

*Alice goes to storm off.*

CP: Wait! I have something to tell you.

Alice: What?

CP: Do not lose your temper. And do not be rude.

Alice: Is that all?

CP: No. (Long Pause.)

Alice: Well?

CP: What size do you want to be?

Alice: Why, anything other than three inches tall I should think would do me just fine. It is such a dreadful height.

CP: It is a very good height indeed!

Alice: (Embarrassed) Are you so tall, Mister?

CP: No. I am 2.9 inches tall. I would very much like to be three inches tall. How ungrateful of you!

Alice: I'm sure you will grow in time.

CP: No. I have been this tall for quite some time, and I do not look like changing any time soon.

Alice: I know for a fact that something will change soon enough. Imagine being a wonderful, pretty butterfly, and not having to sit on this mushroom all day. Why then these lovely flowers that seem to displease you so much would be rid of your grumpy company.

CP: I thought you were getting along quite well with the flowers. Me, I cannot stand them. What did you say me would become?

Alice: A butterfly.

CP: That is absurd. Butter cannot fly.

Alice: No its... a Butterfly is a bug.

F1: More bugs!

F2: New bugs!

F3: Strange bugs!

F1: What are they like?

F2: Are they like you?

F3: Maybe you are a butterfly!

Alice: No, I am not a butterfly. And since you haven't seen one, I am much prettier than a butterfly, actually.

F1: Poor butterfly!

F2: They must be ugly!

F3: Quite ugly, to be less pretty than you!

Alice: Why how rude! When I grow back to myself, I shall picked you all, and pluck all your petals off, one by one.

All: NO!

F1: Please don't!

F2: Anything but that!

F3: We wouldn't be pretty anymore!

Alice: Well then, am I pretty?

All: Yes!

Alice: And I am not a weed?

All: No!

F1: A bug!

F2: The nice kind!

F3: The prettiest!

Alice: Why thank you. That wasn't very hard now was it. I promise I shall leave you be.

CP: Hmmmmmm. IF I ever happen to become some mad form of flying butter, I will come and find you. Presuming you are still you, and have not changed into someone else again, like you seem to do quite often. But until then, history would say that I am right in the fact that I will stay the same.

Alice: Well I am afraid this just not the height for me, Mister, and I would like to change sooner rather than later.

CP: Perhaps if you stayed the same for any length of time, you might not be so confused so often. Yes, you will get used to this size in time.

Alice: I would really rather not have to get used to it! Please, won't me help you, Mister?

CP: I suppose me could, yes. Pay attention, you. One side will make you grow taller. The other side will make you shrink even more.

Alice: The sides of what?

CP: This mushroom.

Alice: But it's a circle. Circles don't have sides. Or fronts, or backs. They are circles, it is all one edge. (Pause) Well? Aren't you speaking to me now?

CP: You appear to be speaking to me quite a bit, but me is no longer speaking to you.

Alice: But if I do not know which side of your mushroom is which, it is not very much help to me at all!

CP: Me doesn't need help. You need help. I have given you a little help. It is not all of the help. But it is all that I owe you.

Alice: Well, I suppose I that will have to do. But you have been incredibly annoying to try and talk to, and I shall not give you the time of day again.

*She takes a chunk from either side of the mushroom.*

(To Flowers) Do you know where the White Rabbit was going?

All: Yes!

F1: His feet trampled us.

F2: But we don't mind!

F3: And he left a trail.

F1: That you can follow!

F2: To the Duchess' house!

F3: How lucky for you!

Alice: Why that is lucky. Probably the first spot of luck I have had all day. What do you know of this Duchess?

All: She is lovely!

F1: She waters us every day.

F2: And sings to us.

F3: And never, ever treads on us!

Alice: Well perhaps she will be a little more sensible, and a little less rude to me. It certainly would be a change from everyone else I've encountered. Now I don't suppose I can get any smaller, so I shall just take a nibble from both pieces until I figure my proper height out again. Or perhaps just a little taller! That would certainly annoy my sister dearest.

## CURTAIN

### ACT I, SCENE IV – THE DUCHESS AND THE DOORMAN

**Alice, White Rabbit, Doorman, Duchess, Cheshire Cat**

#### FRONT OF CURTAIN

**Enter White Rabbit, Alice**

Rabbit: (Knocks on door).

Doorman: You knocked?

Rabbit: I did

Doorman: I answered.

Rabbit: You did. *Gives letter to doorman.* For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

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

Rabbit: No no! For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

Alice: It's the same thing, just different ways around.

Both: It is not!

Rabbit: Please get it right, you know how the Duchess is about being precise.

Doorman: I do know. For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

Rabbit: Right.

Doorman: Right.

Rabbit: Well, I shall be on my way then. I have many other places to be and- why you have cost me two minutes when I only meant to spend one! Late! Late again, always late!

Doorman: I shall watch you go.

**Exit Rabbit.**

*Doorman proceeds to sit on the steps (edge of stage). Vulgar yelling by Duchess can be heard from inside. Alice goes and knocks timidly on the door*

Doorman: She won't hear you.

Alice: Well perhaps I shall knock louder.

Doorman: Well that won't make her yell any quieter.

*Alice knocks anyway.*

Doorman: Look, even if she did hear you, there would be no sort of use in knocking, for this reason; I am the Doorman, and I answer the door for the Duchess. Now, seeing as I am on the same side of the door as you, I can't very well open the door for you now can I.

Alice: Then how am I to get in?

Doorman: I suppose 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 then I could let you out.

Alice: But if I were inside, then I would be inside, and I wouldn't need to knock.

Doorman: You would if you wanted to come outside.

Alice: But I want to be inside.

Doorman: Ah, well then, you wouldn't need to knock.

Alice: I know that!

Doorman: Then why are we having this conversation?

Alice: Because I need to get inside!

Doorman: Well you should've said so! I'll just go in and open the door for you.

Alice: Thank you!

Doorman: Hmmmmmmmm. Uh oh.

Alice: What is it now?

Doorman: I'm outside. Who is going to open the door for me?

Alice: You are a doorman! I thought it was your occupation to be opening doors!

Doorman: Quite right, quite right. Haha, I've never had to open the door for myself before, I'm usually inside you see.

Alice: Please just go inside and open the door for me.

*Doorman goes inside. Pause.*

Alice: Well?

Doorman: You'll have to knock. Can't let you in if you don't knock.

Alice: You already know I'm out here!

Doorman: Still.

Alice: Please won't you answer the door, sir.

Doorman: What's it been asking?

*Alice knocks.*

Doorman: Sorry, you'll have to knock louder. I can't quite hear you, very noisy in here.

*Alice knocks ferociously. Doorman opens door.*

Doorman: Caw, you've got quite a knock on you little lady! Would you like to come inside?

Alice: YES!

Doorman: No need to yell! I woulda let you in no worries.

*Doorman sticks head out, looks around.*

Alice: What are you looking for?

Doorman: I was outside just before, talking to a little lady, not unlike yourself, who was rather determined to get inside. Helped me get in myself, would you believe it? I wonder where she has gone.

Alice: LET ME IN!

Doorman: Ok ok...

## CURTAIN

*The scene is set such as the interior of a house. There might be a table and chairs, a lounge, a fireplace. The Duchess is fuming and loudly ranting, randomly throwing things at the Cheshire Cat, who is dodging and grinning quite happily at the other end of the room.*

Alice: Um, excuse me, Ma'am.

Doorman: Oh you won't get through to her like that, no way. Here, allow me. OI!  
DUCHESS!

*Duchess immediately stops and resumes a cool and composed demeanour.*

Duchess: Yes, Doorman, why on earth are you bothering me?

Doorman: You have a visitor.

Duchess: Someone foolish enough to enter after hearing that frightful noise? Or perhaps brave enough not to be scared off by all the racquet? (She laughs nervously)  
Well, which is it dear?

Alice: Um...

Duchess: Don't um dear, it makes you sound stupid.

Alice: Sorry.

Duchess: Don't apologise either, it makes you sound weak.

Alice: (To self) Why she is a rather harsh Duchess, more strict even than my sister, which I would not have believed! (To Duchess) Perhaps both, Ma'am?

Duchess: Both? Well I suppose that is an answer yes. You may come in.

Footman: It's a funny story actually Ma'am. You see I was outside and-

Duchess: I really don't have time for the boring stories of your day to day activities  
Doorman. Please excuse yourself.

Doorman: Right you are Ma'am. (Goes to leave, stops.) Oh, before I forget, a letter from the Queen, Ma'am.

Duchess: I rather think you forgot and then remembered again, otherwise you wouldn't have started to leave, now would you?

Doorman: Right you are again, Ma'am.

Duchess: Then please speak correctly next time, I do tire of correcting you. Now, this letter?

Doorman: Yes, Ma'am, certainly Ma'am. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.  
For you, Ma'am.

Duchess: For you?

Doorman: No not me Ma'am, haha, no no, I don't play. Well this one time I tried to play,  
but-

Duchess: Once again, stories Doorman, stories I do not want to hear. I did not say for me,  
I said for you.

Doorman: Yep, that's what I said, an invitation for you-

Duchess: Who is this you character?

Doorman: Ah, I see Ma'am, I get ya, very clever you are. An invitation for the Duchess.

Duchess: Much better Doorman. Now be gone.

**Exit Doorman**

*Alice, quite intimidated by the Duchess, spots the Cheshire Cat in the corner.*

Alice: Oh, Cat! I did not know you were here. I thought you had abandoned me for good with those strange little twins in the forest.

Duchess: That does sound like something that cat is likely to do.

Alice: Is it your cat, Ma'am?

Duchess: I feed it when it is here, and sometimes I provide it with a place to sleep by the fire.

Alice: But it isn't yours?

Duchess: I would not say I own it, no. It is its own being, in charge of itself. It comes and goes on adventures as it pleases. I have little to do with it, other than the aforementioned food and lodging when it demands it of me.

Alice: Well, you seem to know enough about it at least. Please would you tell me why it grins like that?

Duchess: Why do you ask?

Alice: Because it has only just occurred to me that this is a very odd thing for a cat to do.

Duchess: Dear girl, it is a Cheshire Cat.

Alice: I can see that.

Duchess: Good, your eyes work then.

Alice: Yes, but why does it grin?

Duchess: Why should it be any different to any other cat?

Alice: Do cats often go around here grinning?

Duchess: Most of them do, yes.

Alice: Why, I don't know any that do.

Duchess: Then you don't know much.

Alice: (To self) Well how rude! (To Duchess) Do most cats talk as well?

Duchess: Most cat's cannot talk! That is ridiculous! You must be a rather stupid and poorly learned girl!

Alice: Well I have definitely spoken to that cat.

Duchess: So you have seen a cat that speaks, but you have never seen one that grins? When quite clearly here is a cat that grins, but has never spoken a word to me

in it's entire life! How preposterous. You are by far the oddest guest that has ever been in my house.

Alice: Well this is by far the oddest house I have ever been in. I still wonder why it is grinning.

Duchess: You would have to ask it.

Alice: But you just said that cats cannot speak, and that it has never spoken a word to you!

Duchess: Yes, I did say that child.

Alice: Well then how do you propose I ask it questions?

Duchess: I said that MOST cats cannot talk, and I said that that cat, in particular, has never spoken a word to ME, in particular. You should be more precise in what you say young lady. I thought someone would be teaching you such things, at your age.

Alice: My sister was trying to teach me, but I got lost when I chased a white rabbit. I can't very well continue my lessons when I don't know where I am, let alone where my sister is.

Duchess: I imagine you should not have done that, then, if you wished to continue your lessons.

Alice: At the time I didn't wish to continue, but it seems I am learning a lot of lessons here anyway. Or at least people continue to try to teach me regardless. I can't very well undo what I have done now can I.

Duchess: Can you?

Alice: I don't know!

Duchess: Well I know even less!

Alice: Would you stop your grinning you silly cat! I am getting rather upset and frustrated, and your constant grinning is starting to seem a little malicious. What do you have to be so happy about?

Cat: What isn't there to be happy about?

Alice: (To Duchess) Did you see that! It talked!

Duchess: I would think one hears one talk, dear, not sees it.

Alice: Well, did you hear it talk then?

Duchess: Yes, of course! I'm not deaf!

Alice: But you said-

Duchess: I know what I said, and I know what you are going to say, but I seem to have to repeat myself! That cat, that specific cat, has never spoken a word to me, ME, sitting here, the Duchess. And it still hasn't. What have a told you about being specific dear? Pay attention would you! If you are to be believed, you have had extensive words with it, conversations even, but it has never spoken a word to me in it's entire life. That is why I hate it. What a cruel, smug cat. Sitting there grinning, when we both very well know you can talk, and yet you never deign to have a conversation with me. Not even a please or thank you!

Cat: In answer to your question girl, that is why I am so happy. I love tormenting the Duchess, and the angrier she gets, the wider my grin becomes.

Duchess: Sometimes I wish you would fall down a rabbit hole and never find your way out, you cruel little cat.

Alice: Oh, no! Please don't say that! There must be someway out of rabbit holes, there must be! I would ever so like to see my sister again.

Duchess: Out! Out the both of you! A friend of that cat is no friend of mine! Out! I must prepare for the Queen's game of croquet.

Cat: Come on girl, best not to be in throwing distance of a saucepan when she starts to get worked up. Maybe we'll go to the Queen's croquet game, I hear they are pretty groovy gatherings. There is a way out of rabbit holes, girl, trust me. The trick is, the way out, is *through*.

**EXIT Alice, Cat.**

CURTAIN

## **ACT II**

### **ACT II, SCENE I – THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY**

**Alice, Mad Hatter, March Hare, Doormouse, Cheshire Cat**

*The stage is set with a long table arranged for tea. There are numerous chairs set about it. The table is outdoors, with various trees/flowers in the background.*

*The Doormouse is asleep, seated at the middle of the table, while the Hatter and the Hare sit either side of him, trying to wake him up or just talking to each other.*

**Enter Alice and Cat.**

Cat: I thought you might like to stop in here for a bit first? People say these two throw the best tea party in the land.

Alice: So long as it doesn't have the same effects as my last cup of tea.

Cat: No guarantees.

Alice: Well I haven't had anything to eat in quite some time. But I don't want to be late for the Queen.

Cat: No, you don't, I'm telling you. But don't worry yourself about it. You won't lose any time here.

Hatter: Greetings Cat. Would you do us the honour of not joining us?

Cat: (To Alice) I'm not exactly the life of this party.

Alice: What did you do?

Cat: I sort of, accidentally, kind of, nearly got some head's chopped off. Specifically his. That one is the Mad Hatter.

Alice: If somehow his outstanding characteristic is being mad in an entire land of people gone mad, he must certainly be something special. Is he mad as in angry, or insane, or are you just using 'mad' as a cool cat lingo to mean he throws really good parties.

Cat: That word sure does have a lot of meanings, doesn't it. Maybe I mean all three. I don't really know. You'll have to work it out for yourself. (To Hatter). Halloo Hatter, don't suppose you could entertain my human child for a while.

Hatter: Possibly, so long as you leave. Why don't you go chase birds, or... chase birds... or something.

Cat: You said chase birds twice.

Hatter: I'm friends with a Hare and a Doormouse, forgive me for not being aware of a lot of cat related activities.

Cat: (To Alice). I'll swing by when you're done. Have a mad old time.

**Exit Cat.**

Alice: No doubt I will even if I try not to.

*Alice goes to sit at the table end of the table.*

Both: No room, no room, no room!

Alice: Why there is plenty of room! Look!

Hare: No room! Absolutely not. We are full.

*Alice sits down at the end of the table defiantly.*

Hare: It seems she shall sit down no matter what we say old friend.

Hatter: Then we shall show her the error of her ways. Change places!

*The Hatter and the Hare move up to the seats closest to Alice. Doormouse stays put (asleep).*

Hare: Why now I have no room.

Hatter: I too have no room.

Hare: This is unreasonable little one. How are we meant to drink tea all squished up against you like this? It will not work, not in the least. This is a very disappointing part of what is otherwise a rather nice tea party.

Hatter: Change places!

*They move right away to the other end of the table. Alice stays put.*

Hare: Plenty of room now.

Hatter: Quite. Who is that up the other end of the table?

Hare: I cannot tell, she is too far away.

Hatter: The Cat did mention he might be bringing a friend by later today. I do hope it is not a short blonde human child. I detest that type the most.

Hare: It could be one of those, up the other end. I cannot be sure, however. Shall we change places and see?

Hatter: We shall. Cha-

Hare: Could I say it, for once, old friend?

Hatter: ... No. Change places!

*They move back to where they originally were, except the Hatter is sitting on top of the Hare.*

Hare: Well this is by far the worst.

Hatter: I am quite alright with it.

Hare: That is because you are sitting on top of me!

Hatter: Perhaps you should not have sat underneath me! *But he moves.*

Hare: Hello little one. How do you do? Welcome to our tea party. Have some wine.

Alice: I don't see any wine.

Hare: There isn't any.

Alice: Well then it isn't very civil of you to offer it.

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

Alice: I didn't know it was your table.

Hatter: A fair point. We shall write our names on it, for future guests.

Hare: We shall. Little one, allow me to introduce my old friend the Hatter.

Hatter: Greetings! I am the Hatter. Some people call me Mad, as in Hatter, The. Although the words are in a better order than that. I don't think they are right though, I'm not mad. I hear people who live in Wonderland are all mad, so perhaps they think I am as well.

Alice: But you do live in Wonderland.

Hatter: Do I? Well I'm glad I haven't gone mad yet. I hear that happens to people who live in Wonderland. Allow me to introduce my old friend the March Hare.

Hare: A pleasure!

Hatter: He is mad.

Hare: I am not! I go a little mad in March, of course, but it is July now, so I am fine.

Hatter: Oh posh, July now? You would think that, you are mad.

Hare: You are mad for not believing me!

Hatter: Do you like riddles, little one? Why is a raven like a writing desk?

Alice: I believe I can guess that!

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

Alice: Exactly so.

Hare: Then you should say exactly what you mean.

Alice: You are beginning to sound like the Duchess.

Hatter: Perhaps she sounds like us.

Alice: I do say what I mean. Or, at least, I mean what I say. So it is practically the same thing.

Hare: It most certainly is not! Why, you might as well say 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!

Hatter: Quite right. You might just as well say that 'I like what I get' is the same as 'I get what I like'.

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

Hatter: (Shocked) I thought he was dead!

Hare: Is it time for more tea?

Hatter: I do not know, my watch still isn't working.

Hare: I fixed it!

Hatter: No, I told you butter wouldn't work!

Hare: But I did use the very best butter.

Hatter: Who has ever heard of using butter to fix a watch.

Hare: We're at a neverending tea party, I didn't exactly have a lot of better options.

Hatter: I'm beginning to wonder whether you are at all qualified in watch repair.

Hare: Have you done a watch repair course?

Hatter: I have not.

Hare: Then I am the more qualified at repairing watches, old friend, because I have at least looked inside of one.

Hatter: Because you dropped it and broke it in the first place!

Hare: Inconsequential.

Alice: Did you say that this tea party never ended?

Hare: Possibly something to that effect was mentioned, a while ago. I can't be expected to keep track of everything I say you know!

Hatter: You are, however, expected to keep track of everything I say.

Hare: I don't remember agreeing to that.

Hatter: Well that is because you forgot to keep track of when you said you agreed.

Hare: (Pause) You may have got me there, old friend.

Alice: Why is that so?

Hare: What's so?

Hatter: Whose sow?

Hare: Not mine. I detest pigs.

Hatter: I'm not fond of small blonde human children myself.

Hare: Yes I do recall you mentioning that.

Hatter: Ah you are keeping track then! Well done old friend.

Hare: Thank you, old friend.

Hatter: Is that one that the Cat brought over still around?

Hare: Yes, just there.

Hatter: (Pause) Oh.

Alice: How very rude of you, Sir. I simply asked how is it so that your tea party never ends, and instead I end up being insulted so fast it made me a little dizzy.

Hare: Never mind that now, you have asked to hear the rather excellent story of why time has stopped for us!

Hatter: I would quite like to tell you the story over a cup of tea, but alas, we can only take tea at tea time. And seeing as we do not know the time...

Hare: Quite the dilemma.

Alice: But if it is always the same time, and it is always tea time, then surely you can take tea now?

Both: Quite right!

Hare: Have you ever met time before, little one? We have. He is an old friend of ours.

Hatter: Was.

Hare: Was an old friend, quite right. Have you ever spoken to Time?

Alice: I don't believe so. I have spoken to a cat.

Hatter: (Sarcastically) How special for you.

Alice: But I can not say I have ever spoken to Time. I do beat time with my foot, when playing piano.

Hare: Well I dare say that is why Time is not talking to you, little one! He wouldn't take well to a beating! Now, if you kept on good terms with time, he could do just about anything for you with the clock. Why, suppose it were 9 o'clock in the morning, and you were just about to begin your lessons: you'd only have to ask Time politely and the clock would suddenly read half past 12, time for lunch!

Alice: Why, that would be grand, certainly! But I shouldn't be hungry for lunch then, having just had breakfast and all.

Hare: Not at first perhaps, but you could keep it at half past 12 for as long as you like!

Alice: Is that what has happened to you then? It is never endlessly tea time?

Hatter: Sadly, no! Prepare for a tale of woe, little one! Now, before I was hosting fabulous tea parties, I once fancied myself quite the singer.

Alice: Were you good?

Hare: No.

Hatter: Quite right. However, I was famous, and as you know, that is not really dependent on a person's talent, or lack of. Thus I was invited to sing for the Queen of Hearts at one of her croquet games.

Hare: He was terrible.

Hatter: I really rather was. Half way through, she yelled out "Stop! You are murdering the time! Off with his head!" Now you can imagine that Time does not react too well to threats on his life.

Alice: I imagine no one reacts too well to such a thing.

Hare: So ever since that, Time has been terribly cruel to us, and stuck us permanently in tea time.

Hatter: And there is no time to clean up in between, you see? Dishes just keep getting dirtier, and we just keep moving around.

Alice: All of this seems to make sense, and yet any normal person would think it is utterly ludicrous. Perhaps I am going mad for being here too long.

Hare: (To Hatter) Is she talking to herself?

Hatter: Yes. She must be mad.

Hare: Excuse me, crazy child. Would you like to hear another story?

Alice: I fear I really must be pressing on...

Hatter: More mad ramblings! Have we not concisely explained to you how limitless your time is here.

Alice: I wouldn't say concisely, but yes, I got the point. I suppose I do have time for just one more story.

Both: Excellent!

Hare: This one is rather special. We shall wake the Dormouse up for it.

DM: I'm already awake.

Hatter: My goodness, since when? Did you make a note of this, old friend?

Hare: To be honest, old friend, I keep forgetting he is even here.

DM: Typical. I always get this from you two. Bloody typical.

Alice: Well I care for what you have to say, dear little Doormouse. Won't you please tell me a story?

DM: Of course! Which one shall I tell?

Hare: You only have one.

Hatter: Be quick about it, or you'll be asleep again before it is done.

DM: Quite right, quite right. (He begins to nod off)

Alice: Well, won't you tell it please.

DM: Of course! Once upon a time-

Hatter: Clichéd...

Alice: Shush!

DM: There were three little sisters, and their names were Elsie, Lacie and Tillie, and they lived at the bottom of a well, and-

Alice: What did they live on?

DM: They lived on treacle.

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

DM: Of course! So they were. Very ill.

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

Hare: Take some more tea.

Alice: Why, I haven't had any yet! So I cannot hardly take more.

Hare: You mean you can't take less. It is very easy to take more than nothing.

Alice: Nobody asked your opinion.

Hatter: Now who is being rude, hmmmm?

Hare: I believe it is the Doormouse. He has fallen asleep mid story.

*They shake him awake.*

DM: Typical! Shall I tell a story?

Alice: You were in the midst of one!

DM: Of course! Which part exactly?

Alice: I wondered why the three sisters lived at the bottom of a well?

DM: It was a treacle well.

Alice: There is certainly no such thing!

Hatter: What a hypocrite!

Hare: If you're going to continue to be rude, you had better finish the story yourself.

DM: Typical! No one ever believes my stories.

Alice: I do beg your pardon, Sirs. Please finish the story, I won't interrupt again, I promise.

DM: Very well. And so these three sisters, they were learning to draw-

Alice: What did they draw?

DM: Treacle.

Hatter: What else would they draw?

Hare: Quite right old friend, there isn't anything else around even if they wanted to.

Alice: But I don't understand.

Hatter: That is nothing new.

Alice: Where did they draw the treacle from.

DM: You can draw water out of a water-well. So I should think you can draw treacle out of a treacle well.

Alice: But they were in the well!

Hatter: Of course they were!

Hare: Well in the well.

DM: They were learning to draw, and they drew all manner of things. Everything beginning with the letter M.

Alice: Why?

Hare: Why not?

Hatter: Quite right! Not so talkative when faced with that logic, are you child?

DM: And they drew mousetraps, and the moon, and memory, and much of a muchness. You know how you say things are "much of a muchness"? Did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of muchness?

Alice: Why this is absolute nonsense. I won't answer such a ridiculous question.

DM: Typical! Bloody typical! Well you have interrupted my nap anyway, so I shan't bother to finish it now. *Doormouse goes back to sleep.*

Hatter: I thought he'd never shut up.

Hare: Have you figured out the answer to the riddle yet?

Hatter: Why is a Raven-

Alice: Like a writing desk, yes. I must say I got rather distracted by all your nonsense, but I'm afraid I couldn't figure it out even if I had all the time in the world.

Hare: Well, here you sort of do.

Alice: I won't take it in any case. Why IS a raven like a writing desk?

Hatter: Are you asking me?

Alice: Yes.

Hatter: I haven't the faintest clue.

Hare: Nor I.

Hatter: Why would I ask a question I already know the answer to? That would be ridiculous, a waste of my unlimited amounts of time.

Alice: You really shouldn't leave one without an answer to a riddle. I don't think-

Hare: Then you shouldn't talk.

Alice: How rude! Why you have shown to be nothing but rude the entire time I have been here! Rudest of all is your hat. It is very impolite to wear a hat at the table.

Hatter: It is also very impolite to tell you that your dress makes you look fat, but apparently I am doing things regardless of whether they are rude or not.

Hare: He is the Hatter. He must wear a hat. How could people tell he was the Hatter if he was hat-less? Why, he wouldn't be a Hatter at all. He would be a nothing.

Hatter: It is very difficult not existing. Too difficult to attempt even for a cup of tea. No, I think I shall not risk becoming nothing, at the unfortunate cost of being impolite. I think I will continue being a hat wearing Hatter.

Hare: There is simply no other way to be a Hatter, you see?

Alice: I believe I do.

Hare: Why next she will ask me to take off my ears and stop being a Hare. I can hardly do that now can I?

Hatter: You tried once. You very nearly became a rabbit.

Hare: (Shudders) That would have been disgusting. I simply had to stop.

Alice: Is there an awful lot of difference between Hare's and Rabbits?

Hare: (Absolutely shocked and offended) Is there...! Is there a difference...(etc.)?! A difference you say...? Why we must kick her out now, Hatter, she is simply unreasonable. Would you believe she could not tell the difference between a rabbit and a Hare?

Hatter: Yes, I grow bored of her also. Carry on, child.

Hare: What shall we do next?

Hatter: Shall we attempt to fit the Doormouse into a teapot?

Mouse: No.

Hare: We shall.

*Hatter and Hare ignore Alice for the rest of the scene, and begin to molest the Doormouse.*

**Enter Cat.**

Cat: You make some strange friends Girl. I could never really get the swing of those two.

Alice: This is the stupidest tea party I have ever been to in all my life! And I didn't even drink a single cup or eat a single biscuit!

Cat: Let us go then. We have a croquet game to get too, don't forget!

Alice: Yes, it is rather about time that I met this Queen of Hearts everyone is talking about.

Cat: Oh, well, she's pretty much as mad and as rude as everyone else.

Alice: By now I have come to expect that. But at least I am prepared for it this time.

**Exit Alice, Cat.**

**CURTAIN**

## **ACT II, SCENE II – HUMPTY DUMPTY**

**Alice, Cheshire Cat, Humpty Dumpty**

*The stage is set simply with a brick wall, atop which sits Humpty Dumpty. Surrounded by woodlands, flowers etc.*

**Enter Alice and Cat.**

Alice: Tell me more about the Queen of Hearts, Cat. I want to be as prepared for her as is possible.

HD: The Queen of Hearts? I know her. Know her personally in fact.

Alice: Why, it is Humpty Dumpty! It cannot be anyone else. I am as certain of it as if his name were written all over his face.

Cat: Well his face sure is big enough for it. You could write a whole essay on that face.

Alice: Don't be rude Cat.

Cat: I will take that under consideration. Come on, I can tell you more about the Queen of Hearts as we go. There's no need to hang around here.

Alice: No need? No! We cannot just leave. Haven't you heard the poem about Humpty Dumpty?

Cat: I believe I have. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty was very rude to a young girl and made her late to meet the Queen.

Alice: That's not how it goes at all.

Cat: You think?

Alice: If we leave him alone, he will have a great fall, and then all of the king's horses and all the king's men won't be able to put him back together again. Do you think that would kill him, cat?

Cat: Personally, I always land on my feet when I fall off walls, so I don't really know. But I imagine it would, yes, going splat all over the cobblestones. Do you think he bleeds blood, or just yolk?

Alice: Oh Cat, don't even mention it! You cruel kitty. We must stay and talk to him. I'm sure he can't be too bad, compared to everyone else I've encountered.

Cat: Wait, I think I remember how it goes. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, there was a Cat there who said I told you so.

*Alice approaches Humpty Dumpty.*

HD: What is your name?

Alice: Alice.

HD: And what does that name mean?

Alice: Does it have to mean something?

HD: Of course! All words have to have meaning. Otherwise they wouldn't be words, they would just be noise. Do you see what I mean?

Alice: Yes, I do. And might I add, that is probably the cleverest thing said by anyone I've encountered yet.

HD: I presume you mean that as a compliment? By presume I mean guess.

Alice: Well then you guess correctly, Humpty. Or is it Dumpty?

HD: It is Mr. Dumpty to you, child.

Alice: Why, I meant no disrespect Mr Dumpty, Sir.

HD: Yes but you sounded as if you meant to disrespect me. That is something that I hate the most, child. People who don't say what they mean, and mean something other than what they say.

Alice: The Hatter expressed similar sensibilities. You would get along very well with him.

HD: I most certainly would not! He is quite mad. Did you actually mean that I wouldn't get along with him very well? That would mean you were using sarcasm. Do you know what that word means? It is when people say the opposite of what they mean as a joke. I hate sarcasm second-most of all. People who use sarcasm, it is very difficult to understand what they mean.

Cat: What do you hate third-most of all?

HD: Frying Pans.

Alice: I suppose that would make sense for an egg.

HD: It is very provoking to be called an egg! Very! I'm sure you wouldn't mean to provoke me, if you found out what I was capable of when I've been provoked.

Alice: Why, I actually meant that you looked like an egg, Mr, even if I didn't say those exact words. And some eggs are very pretty, you must surely agree.

HD: When I use a word, it means what I want it to mean.

Alice: You can't do that!

HD: Yes, I can't do that. And by can't, I mean can, and do.

Cat: Well this is completely unexpected, an arrogant egg. If only someone had warned us not to stop here. Oh wait, this is eggs-actly what I said would happen.

HD: I hate puns as well.

Cat: For a change of pace, how about you say something you like...

Alice: Doesn't it make it particularly difficult to have conversations?

HD: How do you mean?

Alice: If you are using words with different meanings to the meanings other people attach to those words, they won't know what you mean. You see what I mean?

HD: To be honest, I've never talked to me, so I wouldn't know how difficult it is.

Cat: That explains a lot actually.

HD: Some of them have a temper you know. Words, I mean. It's difficult to be a master of them. Particularly verbs, I hate verbs the most! They're too proud, they carry their meaning like it is the only thing they are meant to mean. But I tell them differently. Adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs. Impenetrability! That's what I say.

Alice: What do you mean by impenetrability, Mr.?

HD: Now that is a good question, child. By "impenetrability", I meant that I've had enough of talking about verbs, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life.

Alice: That is an awful lot for a single word to mean.

HD: When I make a word do a lot of work like that, I always make sure to pay it extra.

Alice: (To Cat) What does one pay words with?

Cat: Probably something you'd only have to consider if the words tried to come and collect.

Alice: Do you suppose they have some sort of word union?

Cat: Would the word President be automatically elected as the President of the union?

HD: What are you two sniggering about? Sniggering means laughing, but discreetly. Do you mean to make fun of me with your sniggering?

Alice: We don't mean to, no.

HD: But you agree that it could happen inadvertently?

Alice: I suppose it could, yes.

HD: Well it has happened inadvertently, so there. I am very offended.

Alice: We didn't mean to, Mr.

Cat: I meant to.

Alice: Oh shush! We are sorry, aren't we Cat? How could we make it up to you?

HD: Perhaps, if you have brought me an un-birthday present.

Alice: An un-birthday present? I think birthday presents are best, myself.

HD: You don't know what you mean! How many birthdays have you had?

Alice: Seven, sir.

HD: And that makes you how old?

Alice: I told you, Mr., Seven.

HD: You didn't say anything of the sort! You said you have had seven birthdays, not how old you are. Now, if you had asked me, I would've said leave off at six, but I suppose you can't trouble yourself with it now.

Alice: Or then, in fact! Why, it is very difficult to just stop growing up.

HD: Have you ever tried?

Alice: I haven't seen the need to.

HD: You should give it a try. Why, I haven't had a birthday in thirty years! But I have had a great many un-birthdays.

Alice: But what do you mean, un-birthday?

HD: I mean to say I am given presents and have parties on the days that are not my birthday. How many days in a year?

Alice: Why, 365, I believe.

HD: And how many of those day are your birthday?

Alice: Only the one, I suppose.

HD: You suppose?

Alice: By which I mean, I definitely know, only the one day of the year is my birthday.

HD: Very good. Now, if you take one from 365, you are left with 364. Therefore, I have had 364 un-birthdays every year, to your one birthday! Ha! And you still say you prefer birthday presents! Why I get so many un-birthday presents I don't know what to do with them.

Alice: (To cat) How very selfish and greedy of him.

HD: Just today I was given this as an un-birthday present.

Alice: Why it is a very nice... belt... I mean cravat! (To Cat) Oh, it is rather hard to tell the difference between his neck and his waist.

HD: It is a very, very provoking thing, when a person cannot tell the difference between a cravat and a belt! Very! It is my fifth most hated thing. This is a cravat, and a beautiful one at that. It was given to me by the King of Hearts.

Alice: Oh! The one married to the Queen of Hearts?

HD: Yes, that is the one. He came riding by today and-

Alice: I am going to the Queen of Hearts croquet game just now.

HD: Yes, very good child, but you see, this is a story about me, and my new cravat. So the King-

Alice: Do you want to come with us?

HD: Only if by "come with us" you mean that you will stay here and not keep interrupting my story! It is very provoking to be interrupted, do you know. Very. But even then, I cannot. I must sit up here, on my wall.

Alice: Why do you sit up there all alone?

HD: Because nobody cares to sit with me! What ridiculously easy riddles you ask. Ask another.

Alice: Don't you think you'd be safer down here on the ground? That wall is awfully high, and narrow!

HD: Of course I think I'd be safer down there! I'm a little afraid of heights, to be honest with you. But I can't see anything if I'm not sitting on this wall. And sitting on the ground is dirty.

Alice: But what if you fall?

HD: Well it hasn't happened yet, and I have been sitting up here for quite some time I'll have you know. So there's no chance I'll fall. But, I suppose if I ever were to

fall, the King would come and help me. Ah, you didn't expect that did you! Me with a personal promise from the King, from his very own mouth you see, that if I ever fall, he will come rushing with all of his horses and all of his men, and put me back together again.

Alice: I wouldn't be so sure of that, if I were you.

HD: Fortunately, you are not me, because I am very sure of that. There's no chance I'll fall, of course, but if I ever do, I'll be fine. A promise from the King, did you hear! Did you know, I was speaking to him just today.

Cat: Yes, we knew. Come on, girl, let's go. He's not going to tell you anything about the Queen of Hearts unless it involves him in some way.

Alice: Until we meet again then, Mr.

HD: I shouldn't recognise you even if we did meet again. You are so exactly like other people.

Alice: The face is what one goes by, generally.

HD: Yes, that is exactly what I mean! Your face is just so the same as the face that everybody has – the two eyes, here and there, the nose in the middle, the mouth underneath. 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, yes, yes! That would be some help in remembering you.

Alice: Why, it wouldn't look nice at all.

HD: Wait until you've tried it. Good-bye, again. And since you didn't seem to catch it the first time, by Good-bye I mean you should leave, as I am done speaking to you.

Alice: And what if I am not done speaking to you?

*Pause. HD closes his eyes and doesn't reply. Alice and Cat walk a short way off.*

Alice: Why the cheek!

Cat: Do eggs have cheeks?

Alice: Cat, I am so sick of everyone telling me to be some other way.

Cat: Well you are not exactly regular around these parts.

Alice: But you like me just the way I am, don't you?

Cat: You could do with some whiskers, and maybe a tail.

Alice: I mean as a little girl.

Cat: You're the best looking little girl I ever encountered.

Alice: I imagine I'm the only little girl you've ever encountered.

Cat: Then what are you complaining about? I have not yet seen another little girl for comparison, so I am not yet disappointed in you.

Alice: I suppose you mean that as a compliment.

Cat: I suppose so too. How am I as far as all the talking cat's you've met?

Alice: Your tongue is too sharp. You're sarcastic, too clever for your own good, often rude and always unreliable, and hardly ever around when I need you!

Cat: Sounds about right.

Alice: But you're the closest thing here I have to a friend, so I suppose that makes you alright. Sometimes.

Cat: Thanks girl. Shall we press on?

Alice: Can we really leave him there, on his own? I'm afraid if he goes to sleep, he'll fall off and crack open all over the ground.

Cat: Oh I think you should let him. He was rude to you. He deserves it.

Alice: No one deserves that, Cat, no matter how cruel a person they are.

Cat: He's been sitting there long enough before we came along. I'm sure he's mastered the art of wall sitting by now.

*Alice still seems worried.*

Cat: Look girl, do you want to sit here in the sun and watch an egg cook, or do you want to go do something more exciting?

*Reluctantly- Exit Alice, Cat.* CURTAIN

## ACT II, SCENE III – THE CROQUET GAME

**Alice, Cheshire Cat, Cards Two, Three, Five, Seven, Nine, King of Hearts, Queen of Hearts, Knave of Hearts, White Rabbit, Various of the Royal Party (Duchess?)**

*The stage is set as a nice little garden, white picket fence and the like. There are several rose bushes, some red or poorly painted as such, some white. The one in the centre is being haphazardly painted by the six cards.*

**Enter Alice and Cat.** *The cards do not notice them and carry on with their business.*

Nine: Careful now Five! Don't go splashing paint all over me like that!

Five: I didn't mean to. Seven bumped me!

Seven: I did not! Typical Five, always lay the blame on others.

Nine: Oh that's rich, coming from you! I heard only yesterday that the Queen said you deserved to be beheaded.

Five: For what?

Seven: For bumping me yesterday.

Five: You want a bump? I'll show you a bump!

Nine: Oh you bump like a little girl.

Five: I'd like to see you try better!

Nine: Oh would you now? Come over here and say that!

Ten: Not this again. I don't know why I bother to come to work when you lot always just end up fighting.

Two: Right!

Three: Right!

Two: There is no bumping going on around here unless it is coming from me.

Three: Or me.

Two: Now come on, we've got to get this finished.

Three: Why isn't this finished yet? You've got to get it done.

Two: There's really no need to repeat what I say.

Three: There's no need for you to say what I'm going to say before I say it.

Seven: Who put you two in charge?

Three: I'm not two, I'm three.

Two: You're not in charge! I'm in charge.

Five: Well like she said, who put you in charge?

Seven: I don't need you to back me up five!

Nine: You're not very good at it anyway five. You back up about as good as you bump.

Five: Right! I have had just about enough of two!

Nine: I'm not two.  
Two: I'm two. What's your problem with me?  
Three: Yeah, what's your problem with her?  
Five: Not you two! Or you three! You, seven and nine. I'm sick of you both.  
Nine: Careful with that kind of talk, or else!  
Five: Or else what?  
Seven: You are about to get schooled in how to bump my friend!  
Nine: And I am going to knock some of those hearts right off you!  
Five: LET'S DO THIS!  
Ten: And you wonder why we never get anything finished.

*They are about to fight.*

Alice: Excuse me.

*All of them panic and try to hide behind each other. Finally they notice Alice.*

Two: Blimey! We thought you were the Queen.  
Three: Bli-ME. Could've mistook you for the queen, that's for sure.  
Two: A right shock you gave us all, you did.  
Three: You certainly did shock us.  
Five: You might've been shocked, but I certainly wasn't.  
Seven: Do you ever shut up?  
Nine: I don't think she knows how to.  
Five: I've got a bumping saved in the bank, you can withdraw it later.  
Ten: I wasn't shocked. I'm just bored.  
Two: Enough you two! Well, seven. And five. And nine. Enough you twenty one!  
We've got company.  
Alice: Would you tell me, please, why are you painting those roses?  
Two: We'll tell you quite kindly lass!  
Three: You're very polite in your asking, you is.  
Ten: Which is very uncommon around here. There's been no threats out of your mouth in two sentences, that's some kind of record if ever I saw one.  
Five: Heard one.  
Ten: What?

Five: Heard one, not saw one.

Seven: No one asked you five!

Nine: And even if they did, they would regret it.

Ten: Can't you guys just get along for once?

Five: No.

Seven: Nope.

Nine: Definitely not.

Ten: I'm going to put in for a transfer, first thing tomorrow.

Alice: EXCUSE me.

Two: Oh, we'd quite forgotten about you lass!

Three: Completely slipped our mind you did.

Two: The fact is, lass, this here ought to have been a red rose-tree.

Three: Quite clearly it's not.

Tow: Yes, I was just going to say, as you can quite plainly see, five has planted a white rose-tree by honest mistake.

Three: White rose tree instead of red, you see lass, due to five's mistake.

Five: It wasn't me really, though. It was Seven.

Seven: Oh of course it was.

Nine: Just like the time she bumped you I suppose!

Ten: Actually, I think this one was on me lads. You see I remember doing the paper work and I think I might've ticked the wrong box.

Two: The thing is, it would be terrible if the Queen was to find it out.

Three: Absolutely shocking if she found out.

Ten: Doesn't anyone care that I messed up?

Two: She'd order all of our heads off, you see, no matter whose fault it actually was.

Three: All of us, (makes throat cutting gesture).

Five: Of all the unjust things, consider it wasn't even me.

Seven: Or me.

Nine: Or me even.

Ten: Look, I'm quite happy to take the blame for this one guys. If you'll just pay attention to me for one moment...

Five: It was probably five though.

Nine: That's who my money's on.

Five: Oh you two would love that wouldn't you, my head chopped off.

Two: No five, I wouldn't like that.

Three: Neither would I.

Ten: I would. You bloody well deserve it.

Five: What was that?

Ten: Oh so now you caught that one? Selective hearing is it?

Five: Was it you nine? Or you seven? Probably both of you put together, ae?

Ten: It was me, honestly. The snide comments, the roses, the splashing, everything!  
Why won't anyone notice me?

Two: Enough you lot!

Three: Enough!

Two: Thing is lass, we'll all pay for it, no matter who actually did made the mistake.

Three: So if you could, lass, not tell the Queen if you see her.

Two: That would be quite kind of you, it would.

Three: Quite kind indeed.

Two: And we'll just carry on with our work as best we can, and have it all done afore  
she comes around, you see.

Ten: Except they'll probably just start fighting again, and we won't get anything  
done.

**Enter King of Hearts, Queen of Hearts, Knave of Hearts preceded by White Rabbit.**

Alice: I certainly won't tell her, you have my word. She is an awfully cruel Queen, to  
go around chopping heaps off for something as trivial as that.

Cat: It might not matter what you say girl.

Rabbit: *Blows trumpet.* Announcing the King and Queen of Hearts.

Knave: And me. I'm here as well. Hello? You're friendly neighbourhood Knave? Oh  
don't bother. You never have before. *She moves to stand with the cat.*

Cards: (Scared) Your Majesty! *They bow with their faces to the floor.*

Queen: What is going on here?

Five: Well your Majesty-

Queen: Are these white roses?

Seven: Yes, your Majesty-

Queen: Have I ever ordered white roses before?

Nine: No your Majesty, but-

Queen: Then why would you order white roses? How could you make such a mistake?  
Incompetent fools! Off with their heads!

Alice: Now hold on just a minute.

Queen: Speak when you are spoken to!

Alice: Why, if everyone obeyed that rule-

Cat: Careful girl.

Alice: If you only spoke when you were spoken to, and the other person always waited for you to begin, you see, nobody would ever say anything, because-

Queen: Do not answer back, child! That kind of argument is likely to get your head chopped off!

Alice: But you can't do that. I imagine I have some sort of say in what happens to my head. You can't just go around deciding whose heads are to be chopped off.

King: Well, she does. Quite frequently.

Queen: Quiet!

King: Yes darling.

Queen: Now, who are you child!

Alice: *Curtsies.* Alice, your Majesty. Pleased to meet you.

Queen: And what do you do, Alice? Are you a school teacher? Did you hire a school teacher to school our insolent child the Knave in some manners?

King: I may have done, darling, but I can't really remember-

Queen: Of course you can't, you idiot. But someone certainly better soon. I am getting sick of her attitude. Perhaps you can get the job in any case, Alice, depending on how well you know your lessons.

Alice: But I am only just starting to undertake lessons myself!

Queen: Do you know addition?

Alice: Why, I'm afraid I wasn't really paying attention when my sister tried-

Queen: What is one plus one?

Alice: I do not know, your majesty. I lost count.

Queen: Wrong! You cannot do addition. Can you do subtraction?

Alice: About as well as addition, I suppose, which isn't very well at all.

Queen: Take a dog minus his bone. What remains?

Alice: Well, not the bone, to be sure. And not the dog, it wouldn't have any reason to, without a bone. It would come and bite me for having taken it's bone! In which case I wouldn't remain either.

Queen: So you would say nothing would remain?

Alice: Yes, I think so.

Queen: Wrong! You cannot do subtraction.

Alice: I beg your pardon?

Queen: The dog would get angry, and lose his temper, correct?

Alice: It seems correct enough.

Queen: In which case, when the dog left, no longer having it's temper, it's temper would remain.

Alice: These are not quite the sums I am used to, you see.

Queen: Do you know you ABC's?

Alice: Why, of course!

King: So do I! I can even read words of one letter in length. Isn't that grand! Don't worry, I am sure you will manage it one day.

Alice: Erm, that is very impressive, your majesty.

Queen: Do you know languages?

Alice: Well I know English, obviously.

Queen: Why is that obvious?

Alice: Because we are speaking English right now! If I didn't know English, you wouldn't be able to understand me, and I couldn't understand you.

Queen: But perhaps we are not speaking English. Perhaps we are speaking a language which both you and I know and understand, but which English people would think is quite foolish.

Alice: Not only English people speak English, your majesty.

Queen: Stupid child. Frogs croak, birds chirp, cats meow, and English people speak English. Isn't that right dear?

King: Quite right, darling, you are always quite right.

Alice: But I can understand the Cheshire Cat.

Queen: Then you must speak cat, too. Perhaps you do know languages after all. What is fiddle-de-dee in French?

Alice: But fiddle-de-dee isn't English.

Queen: I never said it was. I just wanted to know it in French.

Alice: I'm afraid I couldn't tell you.

Queen: Then you are wrong! You cannot do languages. What are you good at then, child?

Alice: Perhaps I ought to have given my sister more mind, and studied harder when I had the chance.

Queen: Can you answer useful questions?

Alice: Perhaps. If you ask me one, I will try my best.

Queen: How do you make bread?

Alice: Well, first, you take some flour-

Queen: Where do you pick the flower? From the garden, or the forest?

Alice: Why, it isn't picked at all. It is ground.

Queen: How many acres of ground? You must be specific with these types of things child!

Alice: Why, I'm afraid this is absolute nonsense! If I ever become Queen, I shant ask such silly things of poor little children.

Queen: What! So you plan to become Queen now do you? Without knowing any lessons at all. You think you will be a better Queen than me, and change all the rules? Do you?

Alice: I only said 'if'-

Queen: Wrong! You said a great deal more than that! You said 'if', but you also said 'I' and 'ever' and 'become' and 'queen', and good many other words in addition to that. I don't have the breath to repeat them, but you said them. You heard her, didn't she dear?

King: Yes, darling, she did say them.

Alice: I really never meant-

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

Alice: I don't deny things with my hands!

Queen: Nobody said you did. I said you couldn't, even if you tried.

King: I heard her say that. You should have been listening child.

Queen: Quite you!

King: Yes, darling. However, do you think we could press along with the afternoon?

Queen: Anyway, I think we should start the afternoon's activities. Why have you been holding me up with this business of a teacher who is not even a teacher?

King: I'm sorry, darling.

Queen: I've come to expect it of you. Never mind. Child, can you play croquet?

Alice: Why, yes I can, your majesty.

Queen: Good! I suppose that is one thing you are useful for then. Get to your places!

*The guests disperse to play croquet. Alice moves over to the cards, who are standing with their legs apart and their arms out.*

Alice: She seems to have forgotten about you.

Two: Seems like it. Although she is likely to remember us just as quickly.

Three: Yep, that is for sure, quite right.

Two: Thanks for your contributions, three.

Seven: I was worried there for a while. I'm very fond of my head, you see.

Nine: Me too.

Two: No, you're nine.

Nine: Yes, I know that.

Three: But you said-

Alice: I imagine everyone is fond of their head.

Seven: Me especially though. I couldn't live without my head, I couldn't.

Alice: But that's the same for everyone! We all really need to keep our heads to survive.

Five: Not me. I could manage.

Ten: Oh here we go.

Seven: Typical five. Always having to top everyone else.

Nine: You really want to start this again five?

Two: Quiet you lot.

Three: Quiet!

Two: We don't mean to be rude lass.

Three: Honestly we don't.

Two: We're very grateful for you distracting the queen and all.

Three: Tremendously grateful.

Two: But we can't talk to you just now, or we risk losing our heads all over again.

Alice: Why, whatever do you mean?

Five: We're the arches, you see.

Seven: We have to remain perfectly still throughout the entire match.

Nine: Or else.

Ten: Which I honestly wouldn't mind at this point.

Queen: Child! Are you going to play or not?

Alice: Coming ma'am.

*Alice crosses to the Queen.*

Rabbit: Your club.

Alice: A flamingo? How utterly ridiculous. And the balls are hedgehogs?

King: Of course! Isn't this how you usually play?

Alice: I suppose the concept is basically the same, but the details are very peculiar. I think I will manage, however.

Queen: Good! Commence!

*Stage an impromptu game of croquet. The Queen should constantly be ordering people's heads off for playing better than her or if the cards move, which they constantly are. Everyone for the large part ignores these orders. At some point, Alice moves to the*

*Cheshire Cat, and the Knave, who are old friends and are relaxing to one side of the stage.*

Alice: You don't want to play?

Knave: I've got a lot of better ways to waste my time.

Alice: That is a tremendously accurate answer. I wish there were some way I could be ignored like you.

Knave: It's not that great, really. They only want me around when something goes wrong.

Cat: How are you getting on girl?

Alice: I don't think they play very fairly at all, and they all quarrel so dreadfully I can hardly hear myself speak. They don't seem to have any rules, or at least, if they do, nobody attends to them. And you've no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive.

Cat: How so?

Alice: For instance, there's the arch I've got to go through next, number seven. But he's walking around the other end of the ground now! I might as well leave off my shot and wait for him to come closer to me. And just earlier, I meant to croquet the Queen's ball, but being as it is a hedgehog, it ran away when it saw mine coming!

Knave: Sounds like a pretty regular game to me.

Cat: How do you like the Queen?

Alice: Not at all. She's so extremely...

*Queen walks up behind her.*

...likely to win that there is hardly any worth in finishing the game.

*Queen smiles and walks away.*

Knave: Nice save. What do you really think?

Alice: (Whispers) But she is dreadful! Yelling so loudly, and constantly ordering people's heads off. She's awfully fond of beheading people. It's a wonder anyone is left alive.

Cat: They say she used to be a vicious grizzly bear, and they made her Queen in the hope that she would stop killing people. I guess that didn't work out so well.

Alice: As a Queen, she is a much better grizzly bear. But I suppose, as a grizzly bear, she is doing a very impressive job of being a Queen.

Knave: We all just ignore her, for the most part. There have been hundreds of orders for execution, and I don't think one head ever chopped off. The executioner has the laziest job in the land.

Alice: But the King doesn't ignore her. He does whatever she tells him. And she abuses him so!

King: Did I hear myself mentioned?

Alice: Oh! Only in the kindest terms, your Majesty.

King: Shouldn't you be studying or something child?

Knave: You haven't found me a teacher yet, remember?

King: Oh, yes, of course. Who is this new friend of yours? Some young trouble maker no doubt.

Alice: He's a friend of mine, actually. Allow me to introduce the Cheshire Cat.

King: I don't like the look of him, with his ears and his whiskers. However, he may kiss my ring if he likes.

Cat: No.

King: Come now, you've caused trouble around these parts before I remember. Kiss my ring, there's a respectful cat.

Cat: You see, before, when I said no, I meant no.

King: The impertinence!

Knave: (Happily) Oh you've done it now.

King: Darling, I wish to have this cat removed!

Queen: Off with his head!

Cat: Just try it you old-

### **Enter The White Rabbit.**

Rabbit: Erm, excuse me, your Majesties.

Queen: What is it?

Rabbit: I'm afraid I come bearing some bad news.

Queen: It better not be bad, or else I will chop your head off!

Rabbit: Erm, well, in which case, it is good news.

Queen: Are you lying to me now? Because that would most definitely make me chop your head off!

Alice: (To Cat) I always wondered why that Rabbit seemed so nervous. I think I see the reason now. That is a rather difficult position he has found himself in now!

King: Perhaps he should just go on with his report, darling.

Queen: Fine then. Report!

Rabbit: Well, your Majesty, you know of course how Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall?

King: My old friend Mr. Dumpty! Yes yes of course. Why did he sit on that wall?

Rabbit: Erm, I'm afraid I never asked.

King: Nor did I, come to think of it. Strange thing to do, just sit on a wall all day long, with no company. Well, what news of him then?

Rabbit: I'm, ah, sorry to say that Humpty Dumpty has had a great fall.

King: He what! When? How? Did you send help?

Rabbit: Yes, your majesty, I sent all of your horses.

King: Well they're not much good are they!

Rabbit: I also sent all of your men.

King: Ah, better. And?

Rabbit: Sadly, your majesty, they could not put Humpty together again.

King: Poor Humpty!

Queen: Who is responsible for this! I will chop off their head!

Rabbit: It has been reported that a young girl with blonde hair pushed him off the wall.

*They all look at Alice.*

Alice: What? But I wasn't even there! Who said it was me?

Rabbit: It was reported by a cat, of the Cheshire variety.

Alice: You! Why would you say such a thing!

Cat: Well you seemed quite certain that he was going to fall. I thought you might have pushed him just to be proved right.

Alice: But he could've fallen just by accident!

Rabbit: An accident that you managed to predict, on numerous occasions apparently.

Queen: Off with her-

Cat: Doesn't she get a trial?

Queen: (To King) Does she?

King: (To Rabbit) Does she?

Rabbit: (To Alice) Does she?

Alice: She most certainly does!

Queen: Arrest her!

*The cards rush over and hold her.*

Two: Sorry to do this to you lass.

Three: Especially since you just saved our heads from being chopped off.

Five: But we're under orders you see.

Seven: So we can't really help you.

Alice: Of course you can! Just let me go!

Nine: Oh no, that would be a ridiculous idea!

Ten: We'd get our 'eads chopped off then. You must be mad!

Alice: Why, this is quite ridiculous! Let go of me!

Queen: I will decide whether she keeps her head at the trial.

Knave: Hey, this is pretty alright. I'm not in trouble for once! I don't know how to feel.

King: What is your other piece of news?

Rabbit: I'm afraid to report your tarts have been stolen, your majesty.

Queen: What! What kind of knave would do this?

Rabbit: Exactly, your majesty.

Queen: Exactly what? You best start making sense or it will be off-

Rabbit: The Knave of Hearts, your majesty. She stole them. I thought you had guessed.

Cat: Spoke too soon kid.

Knave: Dang.

Queen: Arrest her!

Knave: I've been here the entire time! How could I have done it! No, please, don't listen to reason. Why start now you might say?

King: Bring them both to the courtroom. We shall decide everything there. (To Alice) I'm so sorry about this. But usually we don't have a trial! It's just so exciting!

**Exit All.**

CURTAIN

## **ACT II, SCENE IV – THE TRIAL**

**Alice, Queen of Hearts, King of Hearts, Knave of Hearts, White Rabbit Cheshire Cat, Mad Hatter, March Hare, Tweedledum, Tweedledee, Cards Two, Five and Seven, Alice's Sister**

*The scene is set as a courtroom, indoors, with the King as the judge and the Queen close by him. Alice and Cat are off to one side, ignored for the moment. The Knave of Hearts is standing front, very morosely. Various other witnesses might substitute as jurors, or you may wish to have them enter. There is a table with a tray of tarts marked "Evidence A". The Knave is led in to the courtroom by two playing cards, who struggle to contain her. Room for some physical acting here, as the Knave manages to get away and is chased around the room.*

Alice: Why are you now defending me in court, when not moments before you were the one accusing me?

Cat: Well, I suppose, maybe I feel a little guilty.

Alice: So you should.

Cat: You were right by the way, Humpty did have a great fall. You proved me wrong. My dear, I thought you'd be a little happier.

Alice: Oh yes, quite happy to be accused of murder. Thank you very much for your help in that respect, but I shant be needing any more of it.

Cat: Have you ever been in court before?

Alice: No. But I expect the witnesses will talk a lot of nonsense, the King will do whatever the Queen wants, which will be chopping off numerous heads, and it will all end in some ridiculous manner.

Cat: Are you sure you weren't at the last trial? That's exactly how it went.

Rabbit: Silence in the court!

*Knave is caught again, and finally stops struggling as they bring him to the front.*

King: Please present the facts of the case.

Rabbit: The first case is why the Knave stole the tarts.

Alice: Well it sounds as if you have already made up your mind as to who stole them.

Queen: We have. Why is his head not off yet!

Alice: The trial should rather be IF the Knave stole the tarts.

Knave: I did no such thing! I most certainly did not steal those awful tarts!

Queen: Can you prove it?

Knave: Prove it? I don't need to. You taste them, you'll soon be convinced how awful they are!

Queen: How dare you insult my cooking! Off with your head!

Alice: Why are we even having this trial if the tarts are right there. No one can even prove that they were stolen, and in any case they have been returned. This trial is completely unnecessary.

Knave: That's exactly what I've been saying! I didn't do it!

Cat: Haven't you worked out yet how things work around here?

Queen: Someone's head must come off!

Alice: Well this is just ridiculous.

King: Don't forget, you're next. The evidence if you would please.

Rabbit: (Reading from a report) It is asserted that the Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts.

Duchess: What does that mean, asserted?

Rabbit: It means "said".

Duchess: Well who said it.

Rabbit: Whoever wrote this.

Duchess: Well then say, "written" instead of asserted. Dear me! This is a court case after all. Be precise!

Alice: She is worried about being precise in a trial as foolish as this.

Cat: It might be foolish, but at least it is consistently foolish.

King: Is the writer of this poem a reliable witness?

Knave: Not in the slightest your majesty, not reliable at all!

King: Oh you would say that.

Queen: Besides, we didn't ask you!

Rabbit: I suppose so.

King: Continue then.

Rabbit: It is WRITTEN that the Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts.

King: When?

Rabbit: I believe they were made all on a summers day.

King: Very well.

Rabbit: It is accused that the Knave of Hearts, he stole the aforementioned tarts, and took them all away.

Knave: Away?! But they're all right there. On that table! Look. Look at the table. You will see the tarts. I didn't steal them.

Alice: You know Cat, given the time, I think I may have made friends with the Knave. She seems to be the only one around here speaking sense.

Queen: Give the sentence dear. Beheading.

Knave: People aren't even listening to me anymore.

Cat: I don't think they ever were in the first place.

King: What about the verdict?

Queen: Sentence first, verdict after!

Alice: Foolishness! Why you are doing things backwards!

Queen: It might make sense if we were travelling backwards.

Alice: But we aren't! And besides, it goes evidence, verdict, sentence. There is plenty to go before heads are chopped off, and I doubt we will see that happen anyway!

Cat: You seem to know a lot about this law stuff girl. Why'd you hire me as a lawyer if you don't need me? You're wasting your money.

Alice: I'm not paying you.

Cat: What? Why'd I take on a non-paying job?

Alice: I didn't hire you! You're not my lawyer Cat! Can't you just disappear, like you usually do?

Cat: Nah. I've done enough of that to you recently.

Alice: Perhaps that is another reason you annoy the Duchess; your inconsistent behaviour.

King: Erm. Right. Of course. Well. What do you suggest we do first then?

Knave: How about you drop these ridiculous charges!

King: That's all I'm hearing from you lately. Drop the charges, or, I didn't do it.  
Why don't you say something new for a change?

Knave: Fine, I did steal the tarts, then I baked a new batch, and cleverly replaced the stolen ones so that all of you would never notice. It was the perfect crime by achieving absolutely nothing at all.

King: Is that sarcasm? Humpty Dumpty would be able to tell. Where is he?

Rabbit: He fell of the wall, your majesty.

King: Oh of course.

Queen: Get on with it you imbecile!

King: Yes dear. Where were we up to?

Rabbit: We should probably call the first witness, your honour.

King: Very well, do that then.

Queen: Just a moment! What if I don't want to call the first witness?

King: Do you want to call the first witness?

Queen: (Pause). Yes.

King: Right then. Who is the first witness?

Queen: I am.

Alice: Were you honestly not going to call yourself as a witness?

Queen: That head of yours better be quiet, young lady, or it will come off!

Alice: I don't imagine it could make much noise if it were off, even if it wanted to.

Cat: Don't give her any more incentive girl.

King: Did you see the Knave steal your tarts?

Knave: No! She coulnd't have seen me. She was too busy ordering heads chopped off!

Queen: Yes, I did. She stole them. Trial over, dear.

King: Right well that pretty much wraps everything up. How shall we punish her?

Queen: Off with her head!

Knave: No!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cat: How unexpected...

Queen: Off with that cat's head too!

Alice: You can't do that! You can't just go around ordering heads off whenever you feel like it! This is such a shamble of a trial, I won't stand for it.

King: Would you sit for it?

Alice: Neither.

King: Then what would satisfy you?

Alice: Why, in the very least, you should call some more witnesses.

King: Should we do that, dear?

Queen: I suppose so. But they better all say that she is guilty!

Knave: They can't possibly! They won't!

King: I'm sure they will dear.

Cat: I'm sure too.

Alice: Me three, although it will still annoy me a great deal.

Rabbit: Call the second witness!

**Enter Mad Hatter and March Hare , *still taking tea and biscuits.***

Hare: Sorry about bringing these in with us, your honour, we hadn't finished tea before you called us.

King: What time did you begin?

Hare: Oh, I suppose, if you're asking...

King: I am asking.

Hare: Well then, probably, the 14<sup>th</sup> of March. Last year.

King: Surely you should be finished by now then.

Hare: You would think that wouldn't you. I myself can't figure it out.

King: Mothers have had babies in less time it's taken you to finish your tea! (To Hatter) And you?

Hatter: I am not sorry, as I was finished.

King: Then why did you bring your tea in with you?

Hatter: I suppose I just wanted to annoy you. Did it work?

King: Yes.

Hatter: Good.

King: Take off your hat.

Hatter: It isn't mine.

King: Stolen!

Queen: Off with his head!

Hare: Why I never would've guessed, old friend.

Hatter: Won't you let me explain!

King: Will we, dear?

Queen: Do we have to?

Alice: Why yes of course we have to!

Queen: Fine.

Hatter: I am a Hatter, you see. I keep hat's to sell them. So they aren't technically mine, per say, in that in the future they will belong to other people.

Alice: Why that is a perfectly reasonable explanation. And you would've cut his head off without ever hearing it.

Queen: Yes.

King: That's pretty much the way things work around here.

Knave: You don't say...

Hatter: Even I would've accepted that as reasonable outcome, based on precedent.  
But I suppose I should thank you for saving me.

Queen: Can't we still cut it off?

Alice: Most certainly not!

Hare: Sorry I doubted you, old friend.

Hatter: I must admit, I am rather flustered! As your penance, I shall not talk to you until tea time.

Alice: But it is always tea time with you two.

Hare: Welcome back old friend! (They hug).

Hatter: Why you won't believe what happened to me today, I nearly had my head chopped off.

Hare: Do tell over a cup of tea.

Alice: Wait! You haven't given any evidence yet!

Hare: Oh, of course!

Hatter: How foolish of us old friend!

King: Did either of you see the Knave steal the tarts?

Hare: No.

Hatter: Absolutely not.

Knave: There! You see! I'm innocent!

King: So you've said.

Hare: The Hatter told me he had heard that it had happened, though.

Hatter: Why, I thought I got that information from you!

Hare: Certainly I didn't come upon it myself.

Hatter: Hmmmm, how strange. Perhaps we just made it up.

Knave: Made it up? You're going to get my head chopped over evidence that you made up? You're both mad!

Hare: Well so are you.

Knave: I might be angry, furious even, but I'm not insane like the two of you!

Hatter: I was close to getting my head chopped off once, remember? And I certainly didn't get my knickers in such a knot.

Hare: I imagine that's because you weren't wearing knickers, old friend.

Hatter: ... Yes... Yes of course not...

King: So your evidence is simply hearsay. And unconfirmed hearsay at that!

Hare: Well of course it's hare say.

Hatter: From a Hare you see. Of the March variety.

Hare: I'm not a rabbit, if that is what you're accusing me of! It's not rabbit-say.

King: I'm well aware of his Hare status. If you're a March Hare, doesn't that make you mad?

Hare: (Exasperated) I'm getting there!

Knave: Now you know how it feels!

King: If you're mad, you're a rather unreliable witness.

Rabbit: Unreliable, your honour.

Hare: What did you call me?

Hatter: Did you call him unreal?

King: I never said that!

Hatter: Oh, didn't you? Why that is the second time today I have made up what someone has said. I'm a rather unreliable witness, aren't I.

Queen: Get out! Get them out!

King: Alright darling. Gentlemen, you may stand down.

Hatter: We're standing on the floor. We can't stand any lower.

King: Out!

Queen: Call the next witness dear.

Knave: Are we still going through this? We're going to keep doing this? The tarts still haven't moved. Or am I the only one who can see them?

Rabbit: Next witness!

**Enter Tweedledum and Tweedledee.**

King: Now boys, do you know who stole the tarts?

Both: (Point to each other). He did it. What! Did not! Did so!

King: Did either of you see the other steal the tarts?

Dum: Not me. I don't like tarts.

Dee: Yeah you do!

Dum: Nah, I don't!

Dee: Yeah you said you did the other day.

Dum: Oh yeah, I did.

King: So you do?

Dum: Yep.

Dee: Told you.

Dum: Nah, you didn't.

Dee: Yeah, I did!

Queen: Idiot! Why would you let these two give evidence?

King: Yes darling, quite right, it was clearly a mistake.

Alice: Do you always do everything she says?

Queen: Tell her you do not always do everything I say!

King: I don't always, young lady. Not always.

Queen: What! When are you disobeying me? And you think I wouldn't find out about it! Well I have outsmarted you, you little weasel! I have caught you out with my cleverness! Thought you could get away with not doing everything I say. Off with your head! I shall assume control of this court.

King: Yes dear. I shall go to get my head taken off then.

**Exit King.** *Queen assumes position as judge.*

Queen: Now things shall run a lot quicker. Off with her head! She is guilty. Any disagreements?

Knave: Several!

Queen: Did I hear none? Good. Enough of this. Off with her head!

Knave: NOOO!!! At least let me actually steal the tarts now so that it's worth me getting punished! Hatter! Hare! Tell her I'm innocent! Tweedles; tell her! HELP MEEE!

**Exit Knave, escorted by card guards.**

Alice: What if I had something to say about the tarts?

Queen: Rule forty two! Human children with blonde hair are not allowed to give evidence!

Alice: That's not a real rule! You just invented it then!

Queen: I did no such thing! It is the oldest rule in the book!

Alice: Then it should be rule number one!

Queen: Contempt of court! Off with her head!

Rabbit: Your majesty, we really must try her for the murder of Humpty Dumpty.

Queen: I never try. I just do. I will find her guilty, and I will chop her head off.

Alice: Well you are not a very good judge, if that is your approach.

Queen: The guilty ones always say that. What do you know of this Humpty Dumpty business?

Alice: Nothing.

Queen: Nothing?

Alice: Yes.

Queen: So you do know something?

Alice: No. I meant no, I know nothing.

Queen: So you do not know nothing. Therefore you must know something!

Alice: That is not at all what I am trying to say! I know nothing!

Cat: Isn't it a little hard to know nothing? I suppose if it doesn't exist, there isn't much to be known about it. Except that it doesn't exist.

Alice: Just whose side are you on Cat?

Cat: I am on no side. I am on top. You should rather say you do not know anything about the thievery.

Alice: Alright then, I shall say that.

Queen: You don't know anything? Anything at all? Why you must be a very stupid girl!

Alice: Could you please stop twisting everything I say!

Queen: I could, but I won't.

Alice: Even that you somehow manage to twist! Now! I am getting rather sick of this. I come down a rabbit hole expecting some sort of wonderland, and all I get is nonsense, nonsense, nonsense. Silly sentences and backwards ways of talking, none of it meaning anything or getting you anywhere, but still having to be proper. Which isn't proper at all, it is just all nonsense. All of it! I don't know how you all stand it. Well I won't any more. I shant speak another silly word to any of you, and that is that!

Cat: Now come on. It isn't that bad here girl, once you get used to it.

Alice: Especially you Cat!

Cat: Me? Why me?

Alice: Yes! I thought you were helping me to explore this place. But all you have done is lead me a merry dance around some of the silliest people I have ever encountered. I wish I had never spoken to you, and had you convince me to go on this mad adventure.

Cat: I thought you wanted to escape your sister's lessons?

Alice: I thought so too, although it seems so long ago now. But what I have come to realise is that anything, anything!, even lessons, is preferable to the utter nonsense that I would have to continue to endure if I stayed down here just a moment longer!

Cat: Well if that's the way you feel, then you're ready to leave.

Queen: Not yet she's not! Off with her head! She isn't leaving here with her head, not after all the trouble she has caused! Off with her head!

Alice: Oh would you give it a rest! You seem awful foolish yelling that every other time you open your big mouth. Why I only just finished explaining that I am done putting up with your nonsense, and you don't even wait a moment to start it all up again. Well, do you know what I think of that.

*Alice walks over and eats a tart off the tray. General gasps of shock.*

Queen: Off. With. Her! HEAD!

*The guards rush over to try to arrest her.*

Alice: Who cares for you? For any of you? You are nothing but a pack of cards!

*Decks of throwing cards get tossed around as the cast scatters.*

CURTAIN

FRONT OF CURTAIN

Sister: Alice? Alice? Where are you?

Alice: Oh dearest sister! I thought I would never see you again! I missed you so!

Sister: I have not been gone very long dear. Did you really get so lost?

Alice: Yes! Quite lost, in a wonderful, crazy land! You would not believe the adventures I have had. I went down a rabbit hole, and met a very tricky Cheshire Cat, who could talk! And these strange little twins who were always fighting. And I shrunk down and had a conversation with a caterpillar, and then grew back up and met a Duchess, a real noble woman! Who was a stricter teacher than you could ever be dear sister. I had tea with a Hatter and a Hare, who had no manners, their way of taking tea was quite mad. And finally, I met a Queen! A Queen, sister! She was the maddest of them all, so rude, she tried to chop my head off!

Sister: (Laughs) What a big imagination for such a small child. How did you manage to fit so many dreams into such a short sleep.

Alice: I wasn't dreaming! I wasn't. Honest!

Sister: Come now Alice. How could a girl really fit down a rabbit hole, even a girl so small as you? And all those mad people, living down there too? Where would be all the room for them? A talking Cat, my word! I have never seen a talking Cat.

Alice: You don't see talking Cat's, dear sister, you hear them.

Sister: Come now Alice. Enough of that nonsense. Back to your lessons.

Alice: Yes, yes, ok. Lessons, yes, I shall. Enough of that nonsense indeed.

**Exit Alice, Alice's Sister.**

THE END