

The book cover features a central illustration of a blue teacup with a clock face on its side, sitting on a matching saucer. A teapot with a curved spout is pouring tea into the cup. The background is a dark, textured surface with several colorful butterflies (blue, orange, and white) flying around. The text is overlaid on the illustration.

Lewis  
Carroll

ALICE'S  
ADVENTURES  
IN WONDERLAND  
THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

  
GIUNTI CLASSICS

  
GIUNTI CLASSICS

LEWIS CARROLL

Alice's Adventures  
in Wonderland

Through the  
Looking-Glass

Edited with an Introduction by  
Luciana Pirè

 **GIUNTI**

*Series Editor:* Luciana Pirè

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## Introduction

“It is not children who ought to read the works of Lewis Carroll”, writes Gilbert Chesterton. Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books should be read instead by “sages and grey-haired philosophers... in order to study that darkest problem of metaphysics, the borderland between reason and unreason, and the nature of the most erratic of spiritual forces – humour – which eternally dances between the two”. For many of us the bewildered innocence of *Alice* casts its incisive, but delicately subtle intelligence upon Victorian society and upon life.

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, born 27 January 1832, was the third child and eldest son of eleven children. His father, Reverend Charles Dodgson, who married his first cousin Frances Jane Lutwidge, was the vicar of Daresbury, a secluded parsonage in Cheshire, and subsequently became Archdeacon of Richmond. The family background explains much in Carroll’s character – his sense of religion and tradition of loyalty and service, a certain pride in social standing; an innate conservatism that struggled with his own originality of mind. Lewis Carroll’s father was a distinguished classical scholar, who published a translation of Tertullian and a number of books on theological and mathematical subjects; yet he clearly had a vivid and indeed ruthless sense of fantastic fun. It is beyond doubt that Lewis Carroll inherited from his father what may be described as two distinct “minds”: the mind of intellect, logic, sanity; and the mind of imagination, dreams, fantasy, and insight. The struggle for balance between two opposing forces remains a riddle.

When in 1843 the family moved to Croft Rectory, in Yorkshire, young Charles began entertaining his brothers and sisters by performing magic tricks and marionette shows, and writing poetry for several illustrated manuscript magazines – such as *The Rectory Umbrella* and *Useful and Instructive Poetry* – which contain remarkable anticipations of Humpty Dumpty and of the Mouse’s tail in the *Alice* books. He built a railway station complete with train in the Rectory garden, and a stage with the assistance of the village carpenter. He also wrote plays for the children to perform in, and tried to promote warfare among earthworms by furnishing them with small fragments of clay pipe for

weapons. As a grown man, he enormously enjoyed games of all sorts, especially chess, croquet, backgammon and billiards. Later, at a time when church officials frowned upon opera and theatre, that prim and proper bachelor still loved the stage, including burlesques and pantomime, and all through his life he imitated the verse parodies and language play that filled the mid-century comic magazines to which he occasionally contributed.

Reverend Dodgson was determined to obtain the very best education possible for his eldest son. So it was that, at the age of twelve, Charles left home and became a boarder at Richmond School. Soon his headmaster (James Tate) showed an unusual ability to foreshadow his pupil's true potential, when he wrote to Mr and Mrs Dodgson that their boy possessed "along with other and natural endowments, a very uncommon share of genius". In 1846 Charles entered one of England's foremost public schools, Rugby, where he was made the object of ridicule due to a bad stammer and his life became miserable, leading him into introversion and shyness. Worse still, his affectionate mother died on the day before his nineteenth birthday.

Following in his father's footsteps, on May 23, 1850, he matriculated at Christ Church College, Oxford. In January of the following year he became a resident of that college, and "from that day to the hour of his death, a period of forty-seven years, he belonged to 'the House', never leaving it for any length of time". The whole of his academic career was such an endless series of excellent marks, prizes and honours that he complained, "I am getting quite tired of being congratulated on various subjects; there seems to be no end of it. If I had shot the Dean I could hardly have had more said about it". At the end of 1852 he was awarded the Studentship; the only condition required to retain it for a lifetime was that he should remain unmarried, and should proceed to Holy Orders in the Anglican Church. As the middle-aged Dodgson put it, he decided to take Deacon's Orders "as a sort of experiment", which would enable him to ascertain whether the occupation of a clergyman "suited" him. That he felt generally unfit for parochial roles can be gathered from a letter to his cousin William Wilcox, where he confessed how, as he looked back, he had regarded himself "as *practically* a layman". In order to be much freer, he gave up all idea of proceeding to the priesthood, and only occasionally preached to university congregations and children. His constitutional stammer – much as he worked at his speech defect, by reciting scenes from Shakespeare – remained a constant problem and may have played a part in his hesitation in facing the official services of the Church.

After receiving his B.A. degree he was named Sub-librarian of Christ Church College and subsequently received the further appoint-

ment of lecturer in mathematics, a position which he held until 1881. He was anxious to raise his income to achieve the independence that might allow him to enter on the literary and artistic career of which he was already dreaming. At this time he began contributing poems and stories to *The Comic Times*, until its editor, Edmund Yates, founded *The Train*. It was Yates who chose from three names Dodgson submitted the *nom de plume* Lewis Carroll; and Lewis Carroll was first signed to a poem – “Solitude” – which appeared in *The Train* in 1856.

Indeed, he was by instinct a graphic and visual artist who never abandoned the ambition to draw; but as soon as he realised that he lacked the talent to become a professional artist, he turned to the new art of photography and became the best amateur photographer of children in the nineteenth century. When he later settled down in a spacious apartment among the Oxford dons’ quarters, where he remained the rest of his life, he obtained permission to build a photographic studio. It was here that Carroll did portraits of a great many of the celebrities of his day; and it was here that he kept for the amusement of his child guests a large assortment of clockwork bears, handkerchief-made mice, frogs, “musical boxes and an organette which had to be fed with paper tunes”.

The fourth of July 1862 was a memorable day, one of those days he marked in his diary “with a white stone”, adopting the Roman symbol. In his diary entry for this day Lewis Carroll wrote: “I made an expedition up the river to Goldstowe with the three Liddells, we had tea on the bank there, and did not reach Christ Church till half-past eight”. Somewhat later he added. “on which occasion I told them the fairy tale of *Alice’s Adventures under Ground*, which I undertook to write out for Alice”. The enchanting Alice Liddell was the second daughter (now about 10) of the new Dean of Christ Church. There must have been some special quality about Alice that impressed Carroll, for he wrote to her after her marriage “I have had scores of child-friends since your time, but they have been quite a different thing”. Carroll’s friendship with the Liddell children was broken off inexplicably. We do know that Mrs Liddell sensed something alarming, took steps to discourage the Deacon’s attention, and later burned all of his early letters to her daughter. In his diary he briefly jotted down, “I have resolved not to go again for the present, nor at all without invitation”.

Although Lewis Carroll told his immortal story for the benefit of a child, he made many other additions to the tale he spun for the Liddell sisters while boating on the Thames. Revised and expanded, the book we know today as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* was published in 1864. Both John Tenniel, the illustrator, and Carroll harshly criticised the first edition because of the poor quality of the pictures. Some

of these 2000 copies were given by Carroll to hospitals and institutions where he thought the book might be enjoyed and some were sold in America. The second edition, dated 1866, came out in November 1865, and the author pronounced it “very *far* superior to the old, and in fact a perfect piece of artistic printing”. As a Christmas gift Alice Liddell received the beautiful manuscript, meticulously hand-printed and illustrated by its author (in 1928 this manuscript volume was sold by the real Alice, then 78 years old, at the highest price ever paid up to that date for a book manuscript).

Carroll’s entire life and literature have become a favourite area for psychoanalytical speculation. Even those who do not accept the sexual connotation make no attempt to question the ultimately sterile series of “repeated rejections”, as the “little misses” grew up and inevitably left him behind in an otherwise lonely and isolated life. Yet, despite his frequent self-caricature as a “hermit”, he was never any kind of a recluse. The man who emerges from the pages of Dodgson’s unexpurgated diary, finally prepared for publication, and from his own extensive correspondence is almost addicted to company, the lack of which he never had to suffer from in his lifetime. His little dining-room at Christ Church holds memories of many dinner-parties, and he also kept a *menu* book, so that the same people should not be given the same dishes too often.

The girl-child was, Carroll confessed, three-fourths of his life, and the single outlet for his emotional and creative energies. He defied the conventions of his society in order to maintain many relationships with his child-friends, and his mature years were dominated by scandals involving his attachment to married ladies, or exceedingly young women, prepared to surrender something of their reputation to be with him, in open defiance of the prevailing moral code. True, Carroll’s sultry photographs of young girls, including the notorious nude studies, are suffused with eroticism. But there is not the slightest evidence that he had any wish for an active sexual relationship with the girls he photographed. Those flawless girls are caught within a vanished moment. The preservation of their innocence was a priority, even though heavenly innocence cannot last.

As scholars grow less anxious with regard to the Freudian assumptions and the “strange incestuous kind of immortality” created around the author and the real Alice, the influence of broader cultural interests is being recognised. The early childhood of the Victorian middle classes was spent in nurseries run by women; only later, at the start of their formal education, did boys enter a more markedly masculine sphere. But for many well-to-do men the image of perfect childhood, lost and desired, remained feminine; the image of the girl came to



embody an ideal vision compensating the competitive and materialistic values that contaminated Victorian lives. Moreover, religion mattered as much as conventional education in the fashioning of this radiant idea of the little girl. The Evangelical movement made the individual's place within the family central to religious identity, which led to a new emphasis on children's spiritual growth. Puritan notions of the inherent wickedness of children lingered, but were increasingly softened. Carroll was orthodox in all respects save his inability to believe in eternal damnation. Understood in this way, the *Alice* books provide an excellent mirror of both the dominant ideas and the concealed anxieties of the era, functioning as a gauge not only of repressed underlying cultural fears and fantasies, but also of the prevailing attitudes and ideas shaping Victorian consciousness.

Confronting a world that has escaped control by looking for the rules and murmuring her lessons, Alice herself stands as one image of the Victorian middle-class child. As we know, the seven-year-old Alice, who falls asleep in a meadow and dreams that she plunges down a rabbit hole, begins her subterranean journey simply because she is curious. According to Carl Jung, "a typical infantile motif is the dream of growing infinitely small or infinitely big, or being transformed from one to the other – as you find, for instance, in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*." But while her ability to change her size at will is at first pleasurable, it soon becomes a puzzling casualty. She experiences wondrous, often bizarre adventures, and meets such strange characters as talking animals and mystical beasts which follow a code of conduct unique to their homeland and totally foreign to the girl.

Almost immediately the surrealist quality comes to the surface in the behaviour of the White Rabbit, who's late, who's lost his glove, who'll lose his head if he doesn't get to the Duchess's house on time. At the tea party "the Hatter's remark seems to her to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it is certainly English"; still, she plays in a croquet game where "the players all played at once, quarrelling all the while". In the tale of the Mouse's tail the prosecutor can also be the judge and jury. A pack of cards can be a group of living people, a child can quickly turn into a pig, a cat's grin exists without a cat; even inanimate objects like stones lack simple consistency. The old, comfortable order has so unravelled that each creature lives in its own completely self-centred, disconnected world. Such anarchy, which resists rational explication, represents a threat to a sensible child's common sense. All pragmatic reasonableness is annihilated together with the basic social and linguistic conventions.

As Alice's adventures continue, the destruction of the normal hierarchy of animals and humans steps up in intensity. This crucial aspect

of Wonderland's chaos is made explicit in the Caterpillar's astonishing rudeness, which also contributes to Alice's experiencing of so many subversive wonders. When the Caterpillar asks Alice to divulge her identity, Alice cannot respond with confidence and suffers the caterpillar's reprimand. She can only explain her current state of existence; how and why she grows or shrinks seems impossible to explain. The Cheshire Cat, on the other hand, is the only creature to make explicit the identification between Alice and the madness of Wonderland, "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You are mad." "How do you know I'm mad?," said Alice. "You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here". Alice cannot accept it and recedes into silence. With so many familiar concepts already lost, she feels a solitary prisoner in her own dream world.

Nonetheless, unlike other little girls travelling through fantastic countries, only Alice seems seriously aware of the implications of her shifting size and personality. At the beginning of her imaginary journey she asks herself the question that will weave through her story: "Let me think: *was* I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, *that's* the great puzzle". As she moves more deeply into Wonderland, her eagerness to know and to be right gives her the power to break out of a dream that has become dangerous. The one lesson she must learn in order to arrive at a definition of her identity is the poignant need to step out from the charmed circle of childhood itself. Duties, responsibilities, and onerous burdens are all that the little Alice will face at the edge of her adult life.

But, at the end of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice's older sister thinks that the little girl will recollect her innocent childish self with pleasure, "remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days". Unlike the didactic children's books of the time, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* had no moral message to impart, except to invite the readers to think back to their own childish happiness. Very often Carroll expressed his gloomy disillusion towards preserving the girl-like attributes by writing another young friend named Dolly, "Some children have a most disagreeable way of getting grown-up: I hope you won't do anything of that sort". In his reminiscing account of what he had intended by the creation of Alice he said that she should have "the eager enjoyment of Life that comes only in the happy hours of childhood, when all is new and fair, and when sin and sorrow are but names – empty words signifying nothing".

*Alice in Wonderland* has been universally praised because it changed the whole cast of children's literature. It was not an iniquitous waste of time to let children plunge into the kingdoms of sheer fantasy instead

of learning dull poetry, latitude and longitude, historical facts about the Anglo-Saxons, or the utterly irrelevant morals the Duchess appends to every statement she makes. By turning inside out the world of lessons and everyday schoolroom instruction, and setting it amidst the absurd anarchy of a dream country, Carroll transfigures the terrifying classroom experience of his own youth into a manageable playfulness. In a world hostile to fancy *Alice* strikes a strong blow against pious moralists and educational critics overly concerned with the religious teaching of children. In invoking, by his innovative linguistics, the “inherently noxious” realm of magic and bringing it into contact with the secular world for the first time, Lewis Carroll was profoundly convinced that a child’s imagination has a value which Victorian education systems dismissed.

In the sequel *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, which appeared in 1872, Carroll presents a structure modelled on a chess sequence. He accepts the analogy between life and chess but makes it clear that his game, though it usually conforms to the rules of chess, is a loose, sliding contest. Games, like language, depend on accepted conventions, but conventions do shift, and people may not be playing the same game by the same rules. In this case, the dominant metaphor of a chess game whose moves are determined by invisible players stresses a sense of helplessness that is embodied in Alice’s greater passivity. She is no longer exploring on her own. We are dealing here with a more complicated kind of nonsense, suspended between an ominous mood and the dreaming denial of reality. There is no plot to the book; instead, dream thoughts pull seemingly disorganised elements together. There is more merciless, embittered ridicule, but, above all, the sequel carries to its extreme the Carrollian blending of formal etiquette and the logic of insanity.

The humour is more sardonic, such as in the Tweedledum and Tweedledee scene (they both sing the most savage song in *Looking Glass*, ‘The Walrus and the Carpenter’) where Alice is subjected to a type of subtle cruelty in a way quite alien to the earlier book. The episode in the railway carriage has all the horror of a sadistic nightmare. As the girl herself repeatedly discovers, authority, characterised in those adult women as Queens and Duchesses, will interfere and impose its angry will. The rude examination of Alice by the two queens, rushing through schoolroom subjects, and turning them all upside down, is the sombre introduction to the final banquet in which the food comes alive and begins to eat the guests.

While *Alice in Wonderland* is set in a spring afternoon, *Looking Glass* takes place in mid-winter; the first book’s golden aura now seems only the yellowing of age. Alice is rudely told by the flowers that she is

beginning to fade. The dominating critic of the language, Humpty Dumpty, dwells on her age and the possibility of death, and in parting, as he offers her his fingers to shake, he says that he very much doubts he'd recognise her if they *did* meet again. The White Knight invents for Alice a nonsense verse about a pathetically aged man "who seemed distracted with his woe". Alice actually wins the match for her side, but in this world senselessness and folly seem to be everywhere. "Consider anything, only don't cry" is Carroll's humble commandment to his beloved children.

Growing old, Carroll was banished from Wonderland. One feels this morbid withdrawal in his later fairytale, *Sylvie and Bruno*, published in 1889 when both his wild imagination and cherished spirit of play were indeed beginning to slip away. Sylvie is pure girlish sweetness, brought into being by a willed act of the imagination, but the old man who narrates the story loses Sylvie at the moment he sees her most clearly. Heavily sugared with piety, the laughter is here turned to nostalgia. A lengthy continuation – *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* – published in 1893, was written in the same style, an inordinate patchwork of serious religious and scientific matters with some humorous treatments of such subjects as physics and politics.

Weary of lecturing, eyed suspiciously by the parents of his little girls, Dodgson resigned at the end of 1881 and employed his mathematical talents in a novel way, writing a series of ten short stories for Charlotte Younge's magazine *The Monthly Packet*. The stories were mathematical problems and they were eventually collected in one volume and published in 1885 as *A Tangled Tale*. Some of the readers of the magazine had sent in their solutions to the author as the stories were published and, in the final version of the book, Dodgson used these attempted solutions to illustrate the mathematical difficulties of each problem, and of course, added his own correct solution. His greater inclination to Mathematics and logic provide an essential element in Lewis Carroll's rich glow of fantasy, always controlled by his scientific background. Consider the mysteriously disturbing *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876), a nonsense ballad over which an unstable mind might very well go mad. It describes "with infinite humor" the impossible voyage of an ill-assorted crew to find a fabulous creature, which proves on discovery to be a particularly dangerous variety, 'the Boojum'. After the *Alices*, this became the most celebrated Carroll book, and one of the world's great works of dark humour.

Despite critical attempts to psychoanalyse Charles Dodgson through the writings of Lewis Carroll, the author of the two *Alice* books was too precise a logician and too controlled an artist to confuse his own dreams with those of his character. He was serious about using

paradoxes and puzzles to stimulate thought in young people and his mathematical writings were intended for pedagogical purposes. He started with textbooks for his students at Oxford, and then developed an interest in presenting his subject in the simplest and most palatable form that he could devise, such as in *An Elementary Treatise on Determination* (1867), *Euclid and His Modern Rivals* (1879), *The Game of Logic* (1886), *Curiosa Mathematica* (1888) and *Symbolic Logic* (1896).

While a massive and almost irresistible myth surrounding the name 'Lewis Carroll' had begun to develop, Dodgson shied away from publicity, and declined to welcome any tribute to Lewis Carroll. In fact, he wrote, "Mr. C.L. Dodgson neither claims nor acknowledges any connection with any pseudonym or with any book that is not published under his own name". Indeed, Dodgson saw in his later years that his dream tales were turning into classics. In 1898, the year that Dodgson died, when the *Pall Mall Gazette* measured the popularity of children's books, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* weighed in at the top of the list. The effect of his family's incisive destruction of his papers immediately following his death, and their unwavering silence, has only been that of emphasizing, in a quasi-religious cult of Carroll's devotees, the extent of a potent phenomenon.

While it is Dodgson's amazing imagination that assures the two *Alice* books a secure place in the literary firmament, still, from time to time, some event lends these classics a decided boost by thrusting them afresh into the public eye. Such was the case in 1932 with the celebration marking the centennial of Dodgson's birth; again in 1951 with the release of the Walt Disney *Alice* film, which, despite its flaws, won its way into the hearts of a new generation. Upon every reading, at the very least some hitherto undiscovered phrase rich in symbolism or suggestion will leap from the page, and throughout the years literally hundreds of interpretations have enhanced the popularity of Carroll's two masterpieces. William Empson sees the Pool of Tears as a satirical microcosm of Darwin's evolutionary theories; Peter Heath finds "surprising insights into abstract questions of philosophy"; Shane Leslie discovers in *Alice* a secret history of the religious controversies of Victorian England. In the 1990s Jeff Noon continued Alice's adventures in *Automated Alice*, in which she is transported to the contemporary world. Thomas French, in *Alice in Acidland*, believes she is on a psychedelic trip; James Atherton calls Carroll the "unforeseen precursor" of James Joyce's linguistic innovation. What this suggests is that, through its playing with words, Carroll's imaginative writing exemplifies his longing to break through conventional language and get to a state of free utterance. Like Joyce, he himself discouraged scholarly exegeses and believed, with the Duchess, that his readers should "Take care of

the sounds and the sense will take care of itself". Years after the publication of the *Alice* books, Dodgson himself commented wryly, "Words mean more than we mean to express when we use them. So a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant".

However seriously one takes these arguments, it often seems that a simple fact has been forgotten – that *Alice's* inimitable magic has captivated generation upon generation of children of all ages whose needs this sensitive author supremely understood. Read aloud, by an elder to a child, the meaning of Lewis Carroll's verbal nonsensical world can lastly be found in the phonetic and rhythmical play, until it becomes pure lullaby. As Virginia Woolf said very reasonably, "the two *Alices* are not books for children; they are the only books in which we become children".

Alice's Adventures  
in Wonderland  
*(With Illustrations by the Author)*





All in the golden afternoon  
Full leisurely we glide;  
For both our oars, with little skill,  
By little arms are plied,  
While little hands make vain pretence  
Our wanderings to guide.

Ah, cruel Three! In such an hour,  
Beneath such dreamy weather,  
To beg a tale of breath too weak  
To stir the tiniest feather!  
Yet what can one poor voice avail  
Against three tongues together?

Imperious Prima flashes forth  
Her edict 'to begin it':  
In gentler tones Secunda hopes  
'There will be nonsense in it!'  
While Tertia interrupts the tale  
Not *more* than once a minute.

Anon, to sudden silence won,  
In fancy they pursue  
The dream-child moving through a land  
Of wonders wild and new,  
In friendly chat with bird or beast –  
And half believe it true.

And ever, as the story drained  
The wells of fancy dry,  
And faintly strove that weary one  
To put the subject by,  
'The rest next time –' 'It is next time!'  
The happy voices cry.

Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:  
Thus slowly, one by one,  
Its quaint events were hammered out –  
And now the tale is done,  
And home we steer, a merry crew,  
Beneath the setting sun.

Alice! A childish story take,  
And, with a gentle hand,  
Lay it where Childhood's dreams are twined  
In Memory's mystic band,  
Like pilgrim's wither'd wreath of flowers  
Pluck'd in a far-off land.

PREFACE TO THE  
SEVENTY-NINTH THOUSAND

As Alice is about to appear on the Stage, and as the lines beginning: 'Tis the voice of the Lobster' were found to be too fragmentary for dramatic purposes four lines have been added to the first stanza and six to the second, while the Oyster has been developed into a Panther.

*Christmas, 1886*

PREFACE TO THE  
EIGHTY-SIXTH THOUSAND  
OF THE 6/- EDITION

Enquiries have been so often addressed to me, as to whether any answer to the Hatter's Riddle (see p. 79) can be imagined, that I may as well put on record here what seems to me to be a fairly appropriate answer, viz. 'Because it can produce a few notes, though they are *very* flat; and it is never put with the wrong end in front!' This, however, is merely an afterthought: the Riddle, as originally invented, had no answer at all.

For this eighty-sixth thousand, fresh electrotypes have been taken from the wood-blocks (which, never having been used for printing from, are in as good condition as when first cut in 1865), and the whole book has been set up afresh with new type. If the artistic qualities of this re-issue fall short, in any particular, of those possessed by the original issue, it will not be for want of painstaking on the part of author, publisher, or printer.

I take this opportunity of announcing that the Nursery 'Alice,' hitherto priced at four shillings, net, is now to be had on the same terms as the ordinary shilling picture-books – although I feel sure that it is, in every quality (except the *text* itself, on which I am not qualified to pronounce), greatly superior to them. Four shillings was a perfectly reasonable price to charge, considering the very heavy initial outlay I had incurred: still, as the Public have practically said 'We will *not* give more than a shilling for a picture-book, however artistically got-up', I am content to reckon my outlay on the book as so much dead loss, and, rather than let the little ones, for whom it was written, go without it, I am selling it at a price which is, to me, much the same thing as *giving* it away.

*Christmas, 1896*

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## CHAPTER I

### DOWN THE RABBIT-HOLE

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?'

So she was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!' (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but, when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and, burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never

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

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.

Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next. First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything: then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and book-shelves: here and there she saw maps and pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed: it was labeled 'ORANGE MARMALADE,' but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar, for fear of killing somebody underneath, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell past it.

'Well!' thought Alice to herself. 'After such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down-stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!' (Which was very likely true.)

Down, down, down. Would the fall *never* come to an end? 'I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?' she said aloud. 'I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think –' (for, you see, Alice had learnt several things of this sort in her lessons in the school-room, and though this was not a *very* good opportunity for showing off her knowledge, as there was no one to listen to her, still it was good practice to say it over) '– yes, that's about the right distance – but then I



wonder what Latitude or Longitude I've got to?" (Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say.)

Presently she began again. 'I wonder if I shall fall right *through* the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards! The antipathies, I think –' (she was rather glad there *was* no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word) '– but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand? Or Australia?' (and she tried to curtsy as she spoke – fancy, *curtseying* as you're falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?) 'And what an ignorant little girl she'll think me for asking! No, it'll never do to ask: perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere.'

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. 'Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think!' (Dinah was the cat.) 'I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah, my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder?' And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, 'Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?' and sometimes 'Do bats eat cats?', for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it. She felt that she was dozing off, and had just begun to dream that she was walking hand in hand with Dinah, and was saying to her, very earnestly, 'Now, Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?', when suddenly, thump! thump! down she came upon a heap of sticks and dry leaves, and the fall was over.

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment: she looked up, but it was all dark overhead: before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, 'Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!' She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

Suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass: there was nothing on it but a tiny golden key, and Alice's first idea was that this might belong to one of the doors of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; 'and even if my head *would* go through,' thought poor Alice, 'it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh,

how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin.' For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible.

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes: this time she found a little bottle on it ('which certainly was not here before,' said Alice), and tied round the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words 'DRINK ME' beautifully printed on it in large letters.

It was all very well to say 'Drink me,' but the wise little Alice was not going to do *that* in a hurry. 'No, I'll look first,' she said, 'and see whether it's marked "*poison*" or not'; for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you cut your finger *very* deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink much from a bottle marked 'poison,' it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

However, this bottle was *not* marked 'poison,' so Alice ventured to taste it, and, finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy, and hot buttered toast), she very soon finished it off.

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