



Eva Le Gallienne & Florida Friebus'

# **Alice in Wonderland**

**March 1–April 18, 2020**



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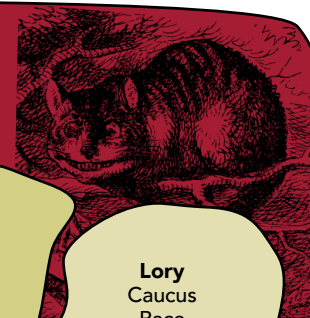
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# CHARACTER MAP



## White Rabbit

Constantly worried and slightly late to everything, he is a servant and herald to the Duchess and the Queen of Hearts.

## Mouse

Meets Alice swimming in a pool of her tears. He promises to help her dry off by rattling off the driest information that he can.

## Dodo

Friends with Mouse. Proposes a Caucus Race.

## Lory

Caucus Race participant.

## Duchess

Disgraced because of a past fight with the Queen of Hearts. The Queen of Hearts has ordered her execution. She is concerned with finding the morals of all situations.

## Frog-Footman

Footman for the Queen of Hearts. Invites the Duchess to play croquet.

## Caterpillar

Discusses change with Alice and offers her a mushroom to help her get to the size she would like to be.

## Eaglet

Caucus Race participant.

## Cook

Works for the Duchess.

## Alice

A seven-year-old with a grand imagination. She steps through a looking glass and enters into Wonderland.

## Cheshire Cat

Wonderland creature who has the power to appear and vanish. He advises Alice that everyone in Wonderland is mad.

## March Hare

Wonderland creature and friend of the Mad Hatter and the Dormouse. Co-host of the tea party Alice joins.

## Dormouse

Sleepy Wonderland creature and friend of the March Hare and Mad Hatter.

## Mad Hatter

Co-host of the tea party Alice joins. He recently angered Time by not keeping the proper beat during a musical performance for the Queen of Hearts. Testifies in the Knave of Hearts' trial.

**Two, Five, and Seven of Spades**  
Gardeners for the Queen of Hearts.

## Red Queen

Introduces Alice to Wonderland's chessboard. Advises Alice to travel through the chess squares of Wonderland and promises that when Alice reaches the eighth square, Alice will be a queen.

## Knave of Hearts

Member of the Queen of Hearts' court. He stands trial after he is accused of stealing tarts.

## The King of Hearts

Married to the Queen of Hearts. Presides over the trial of the Knave of Hearts.

## The Queen of Hearts

Temperamental queen who is quick to order that others be beheaded. Married to the King of Hearts.

## Guard

Railroad guard who chides Alice for not having a ticket for the train that travels from the first square to the fourth square.



## Tweedledee and Tweedledum

Twins who live in the fourth square. Together they recite the poem of "the Walrus and the Carpenter" for Alice, a poem full of moral ambiguity.

## White Queen

A queen Alice meets on her journey through the squares. She "lives backwards," that is, she knows what will happen in the future. She offers to hire Alice as a companion.

## Sheep

Owner of a shop Alice visits on her journey through the squares. She sells Alice an egg.

## Humpty Dumpty

The egg that the Sheep sold to Alice. Surly and self-assured, he sits high on a wall, confident that should he fall, all the king's horses and all the king's men will put him back together again. He lives in the sixth square.

## The White Knight

A clumsy knight who has trouble staying on his horse. He lives in the seventh square.

## SYNOPSIS

At exactly seven-and-a-half years old, Alice has an active and vivid imagination. One afternoon, as she plays chess with her cat, Dinah, she begins to describe one of her latest imaginations—an idea she calls the Looking-Glass House. The rooms in the Looking-Glass House look much like the rooms in Alice’s current house, only they appear reversed. Alice remarks that she is going to pretend that the entrance into the house is through the looking glass hung in her drawing room. As she describes the entrance into the new house, the actual looking-glass in the drawing room morphs into a portal, and Alice steps through it into a new world.

As soon as she steps into the new realm, Alice notices a small door. Near the door, there is a table on which sits a vial with a tag that says, “Drink Me.” At her current height, Alice is too tall to fit through the door. Desperate to explore the garden beyond the door, Alice drinks from the vial in the hopes that it will help her get to the right size to enter the garden. As soon as she drinks, Alice begins to change sizes. Eventually, once she becomes the right size to fit through the door, she realizes that she has left the key to the door on top of the table where she found the vial. Frustrated at her predicament, Alice begins to cry, and her tears pool into a large body of water. Alice begins to swim in her tears and as she does so, she encounters the Mouse. He promises to dry her off by reciting the driest information that he knows. Once ashore, the Mouse introduces Alice to the Dodo, the Lory, and the Duck.

After witnessing a caucus race - a nonsensical game that satires political races - between the Mouse, the Lory, the Duck, and the Dodo, Alice begins to explore Wonderland on her own. Her exploration leads to encounters with various mystical creatures and characters such as an enigmatic Caterpillar, a Frog-Footman, a disgraced Duchess, and a vanishing Cheshire Cat. As she interacts with Wonderland’s inhabitants, Alice begins to realize that this new world operates upon a very different set of logic and natural laws than her world does. Eventually, Alice finds herself at a tea party with the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse. At this party, Alice learns about the Queen of Hearts and the brutal way in which she rules the land.

When Alice leaves the tea party, she finds herself in the Queen of Hearts’ garden. The Queen of Hearts invites Alice to a game of croquet in which upside-down flamingos are used as mallets. Alice has some trouble playing with these mallets, but the game is short-lived as the Queen of Hearts quickly insists that the Gryphon, one of her courtiers, introduce Alice to the Mock Turtle, a dour turtle with a self-proclaimed grim life story. Alice



“Mad Tea Party” by John Tenniel, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

meets the Mock Turtle and hears what the turtle has to say. However, the Mock Turtle’s story is cut short when the White Rabbit enters to share news that a trial is beginning in the court. The Knave of Hearts has been accused of eating some tarts that did not belong to him, and he is on trial for his life.

The trial is full of antics, and the lack of logic during the trial baffles and frustrates Alice. Finally, Alice proclaims that the trial is nonsense. Because of the outburst, the Queen of Hearts orders that Alice be beheaded. Before the Queen’s guards can catch her though, Alice escapes the courtroom.

On the run, Alice ends up in a realm that looks like a giant chessboard. There, she meets the Red Queen who advises Alice to travel through the squares of the chessboard. The Red Queen lets Alice know that once she reaches the eighth square on the board, she will become a queen. Alice decides to follow the Red Queen’s advice and sets out on a journey through the chessboard squares.

In each square of her journey, Alice enters a different realm of Wonderland and encounters the eccentric characters who live there. The catalogue of characters Alice meets include a strict railroad guard, the perplexing twins Tweedledee and Tweedledum, the voyeuristic White Queen, a surly sheep, the irritable Humpty Dumpty, and the confused White Knight.

Finally, Alice reaches the eighth square of the board and is crowned Queen and begins to rule alongside the Red and White Queens. The queens decide to throw a banquet in honor of Alice. As the characters of Wonderland toast to Alice’s health, Alice becomes overwhelmed and proclaims that she cannot stand Wonderland any longer. Suddenly, everything around her vanishes, and Alice wakes up. She is back in her own home with her cat, Dinah. Her adventure, it seems, was all a dream. ♦

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **LEWIS CARROLL**

**Lewis Carroll** was born on January 27, 1832 as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in Daresbury, Cheshire, England. He was the eldest son and third child of eleven born to Frances Jane Lutwidge and the Reverend Charles Dodgson. Dodgson's father was a member of the clergy in Daresbury's parsonage and held various positions within the church throughout his life.

Daresbury was an isolated country village, so it provided Dodgson and his siblings with few opportunities to make friends with anyone outside of their family. Nevertheless, they were able to entertain themselves by creating new games to play. Dodgson had a particular knack for inventing games and would often enlist his siblings to take part in them.

When he was twelve years old, Dodgson began his formal education at Richmond School in Yorkshire. Richmond School was small and Dodgson enjoyed his studies there. The following year, Dodgson was sent to Rugby School, a boarding school that he attended for three years. While attending Rugby School, Dodgson excelled in mathematics and won academic prizes for his work there. However, he hated the lack of privacy, found the teaching to be uninspired, and suffered severe bullying.

In 1851, Dodgson began undergraduate coursework at Christ Church in Oxford where he was awarded a studentship (scholarship) for his academic performance. Dodgson continued to excel academically at the university, and before long, he was involved in teaching mathematics courses for the school. During the time he taught mathematics, Dodgson remained involved in creative pursuits. He was an avid photographer and wrote essays and poetry. Dodgson had many of his poems and essays published anonymously, at first. However, in March 1865, Dodgson published the poem "Solitude" under the pseudonym, "Lewis Carroll." Dodgson continued to publish all non-academic work under that pseudonym, reserving his real name only for his works on mathematics.

As an instructor at Christ Church, Dodgson had difficulty commanding a room of undergraduates during his lectures—he had a quiet voice and severe stammer which made it challenging for him to keep order during classes. However, Dodgson was a gifted storyteller and would entertain the children who visited or lived near Christ Church with fantastical tales. Henry George Liddell, the dean of Christ Church, had four children—Harry, Lorina, Edith, and Alice—who loved Dodgson's stories.

On July 4, 1862, during an afternoon picnic with his friend



Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) Self-Portrait, circa 1895.



Alice Liddell and her two sisters, photograph by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, circa 1859.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **LEWIS CARROLL** CONTINUED...

Robinson Duckworth as well as Alice, Lorina, and Edith, Dodgson began to tell fantastic tales of a young girl's journey through a wonderland. The children loved the tale. Dodgson had named the protagonist of the story after Alice Liddell, and the story he told that afternoon became the first iteration of what would become *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Once the Liddell children returned home from the picnic, Alice exclaimed that Dodgson simply must write down the story for her. And he did. Two years later, Dodgson delivered a handwritten and illustrated copy of *Alice's Adventures Underground* to Alice Liddell.

Later, when the novelist Henry Kingsley visited the Liddell home, he noticed the book in the family's drawing room. He read it and urged Dodgson to formally publish the work. Dodgson revised his novel, and ultimately published it as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865. The book had a slow but steadily increasing success, and eventually, Dodgson decided to compose a sequel to the work. This sequel, entitled *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* was published in 1871.

Besides writing, Dodgson became a notable photographer, capturing portraits of artists such as the actress Ellen Terry and poet Alfred Lord Tennyson. Throughout his life, Dodgson also wrote a number of humorous pamphlets, essays, and poems which were, for the most part, published in collections such as *Phantasmagoria and Other Poems* (1869).

In 1898, not long before his 66<sup>th</sup> birthday, Dodgson contracted a severe case of influenza which led to pneumonia. He died from the disease on January 14, 1898. ♦

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## ABOUT THE ADAPTORS: EVA LE GALLIENNE AND FLORIDA FRIEBUS



Eva Le Gallienne,  
photograph by Berenice  
Abbott, circa 1927.

### Eva Le Gallienne

Eva Le Gallienne was born on January 11, 1899 in London, England to British poet and journalist, Richard Le Gallienne and Danish journalist, Julie Norregard. When she was seven years old, Le Gallienne saw a theatrical production starring the famed actress, Sarah Bernhardt, and from that point forward, Le Gallienne knew she wanted to work in the theater. Le Gallienne made her stage debut in London in 1914 as a walk-on role in Maurice Maeterlinck's opera, *Monna Vanna*, and in 1915, Le Gallienne moved to New York with her mother to pursue acting.

During her first few years in New York, Le Gallienne did not have as much success as she had anticipated. She made appearances in minor roles in various productions for nearly five years until, at the age of twenty, she enjoyed her first big success in Arthur Richman's *Not So Long Ago*. This was followed by an even greater hit in 1921, when Le Gallienne starred as Julie in *Liliom* by Ferenc Molnar in a production which ran for 300 performances.

During her time performing, Le Gallienne became fascinated by the idea of establishing a repertory theater, something that was not common in the United States. In 1926, Le Gallienne set aside her career as a Broadway star, and founded the Civic Repertory Theatre, which staged classic and important foreign plays at reasonable admission prices. Le Gallienne wore many hats at the Civic Repertory Theatre, adapting classic stories into playscripts for production, directing, and acting as needed. It was at the Civic Repertory Theatre that Le Gallienne and Florida Friebus's adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* premiered in 1932, with Le Gallienne in the role of the White Queen. While the Civic Repertory Theatre consistently played to full houses, the company was hit badly during the Great Depression and eventually closed its doors in 1933.

Despite the economic setback that accompanied the Great Depression, Le Gallienne's passion for theater never dwindled. In the years following the Civic Repertory Theatre, Le Gallienne returned to Broadway, translated and acted in Henrik Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, lectured at colleges, acted in touring plays, directed many productions for the Theater Guild, translated Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Seagull*, and appeared on television. In 1982, Le Gallienne revived her production of *Alice in Wonderland* on Broadway, reprising her role as the White Queen. The production, however,

only ran for 21 performances.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan awarded Le Gallienne with the National Medal of Arts for her contributions to the American theater. Le Gallienne continued to translate classic tales, write, act, and direct until the end of her life. Le Gallienne died on June 3, 1991 at the age of 92 from heart failure.



Florida Friebus, 1926.

### Florida Friebus

Florida Friebus was born on October 10, 1909 in Auburndale, Massachusetts. Growing up in a theatrical family, Friebus was surrounded by theater from a young age. Friebus first acted professionally at the Civic Repertory Theatre in 1929. There, she met Eva Le Gallienne, and the two decided to

collaborate in adapting Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* into a theatrical playscript. In 1932, Friebus played the Cheshire Cat in the original production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

After the Civic Repertory Theatre closed in 1933, Friebus continued to act, garnering an extensive list of theatrical credits. In 1959, Friebus made a successful shift to television when she landed the role of Winifred Gillis in *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. After the show ended, Friebus continued to appear in shows such as *The Bob Newhart Show*, *Father Knows Best*, *the Partridge Family*, and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, among others.

During her career as an actor, Friebus served on the council for the Actors' Equity Association, championing rights of performers and artists in the age of McCarthyism and was appointed as the Chair of the Anti-Blacklist Committee, a position for which she, herself, was blacklisted.

Friebus died from cancer in 1988 at the age of 78. ♦

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## TIMELINE: THE HISTORY OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND

- 1832** Lewis Carroll is born as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson on January 27 in Daresbury Parsonage, Cheshire, England, the third child and eldest son born to the Reverend Charles Dodgson and Frances Jane Lutwidge.
- 1851** Dodgson begins undergraduate coursework at Christ Church at Oxford University where he studies mathematics and classics.
- 1852** Dodgson is awarded a studentship at Christ Church for his academic performance. This studentship provides Dodgson with an annual stipend to support his academic work. Dodgson maintains this studentship for the rest of his life.
- 1854** Dodgson graduates from Christ Church with a degree in Mathematics and Classics.
- 1856** Dodgson first uses the pseudonym "Lewis Carroll" when he publishes a poem entitled "Solitude."
- 1862** On July 4, Dodgson begins to invent the story that becomes the basis for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* during an afternoon boat ride and picnic with the Liddell children, Alice, Edith, and Lorina.
- 1865** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is published under the pseudonym "Lewis Carroll." The novel gains success.
- 1871** Dodgson publishes the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* titled *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*.
- 1898** Dodgson dies of influenza and pneumonia on January 14.
- 1903** The first film adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* premieres. The eight-minute silent film is directed by Cecil Hepworth and Percy Stow.
- 1931** The film *Alice in Wonderland* directed by Bud Pollard premieres. It is the first film adaptation of the story to use sound and to include Carroll's original dialogue.
- 1932** *Alice in Wonderland* adapted by Eva Le Gallienne and Florida Friebus premieres at the Civic Repertory Theatre in New York. Le Gallienne plays the White Queen and Friebus plays the Cheshire Cat in the original production.
- 1949** *Alice in Wonderland*, a full-length live-action French film adaptation of the story, directed by Dallas Bower, premieres.
- 1951** The Walt Disney Company releases *Alice in Wonderland*, a full-length animated adaptation of Carroll's story directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske.
- 1982** Eva Le Gallienne and Florida Friebus's stage adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* is revived on Broadway. Eva Le Gallienne reprises her role as the White Queen. The production closes after 21 performances.
- 1983–1984** Carroll's *Alice* stories are adapted as a Japanese anime cartoon television series titled *Fushigi no Kini no Alice*.
- 1985** *Alice in Wonderland*, a TV movie directed by Harry Harris, premieres on CBS.
- 1988** Director Jan Švankmajer releases a dark and twisted film adaptation of Carroll's story titled *Alice*.
- 1992–1995** The Walt Disney Company produces *Adventures in Wonderland*, the longest-running television series based on Carroll's *Alice* stories.
- 1999** The TV movie *Alice in Wonderland*, directed by Nick Willing, premieres. It features a star-studded cast including Whoopi Goldberg, Ben Kingsley, Martin Short, and Gene Wilder.
- 2010** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a ballet in three acts by Christopher Wheeldon commissioned by The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, and the National Ballet of Canada premieres.
- 2016** The Walt Disney Company produces a live-action sequel to their 2010 film titled *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. The film is directed by James Bobin and features Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, and Anne Hathaway.



## THE VICTORIAN ERA: THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

**The Victorian Era** is considered as the time from when Queen Victoria ascended to the British throne in 1837 to the time of her death in 1901. This era is marked by a distinct delineation of socio-economic classes and a deep concern for ethics and morality—or at least the appearance of morality. During the Industrial Revolution prior to the Victorian Age, England saw a large boom in city populations. Families who had spent generations working and living in the countryside moved to large urban centers to seek out industrial jobs. These industrial jobs presented the former agrarian population with a new rhythm of life—unlike farm and village life which required a constant participation in work projects, industrial jobs began at a certain time in the day and ended at a certain time in the day. This new clock in and clock out type of life opened the doors to greater amounts of leisure time for the working class. Out of this newfound leisure time, the entertainment industry began to bloom, and people of all classes began to flock to sensational and spectacular displays for entertainment. Consumption of this type of entertainment—full of gossip, grotesque tales, burlesque shows, and death-defying stunts—often directly contradicted the strict morality code.

The Victorian Era is an era of contradiction. On one hand, the desire to exhibit and practice morality dominated day-to-day interactions. On the other hand, the desire to consume flashy and gossip-filled entertainment led to a degree of corruption in Victorian society.

This world—the Victorian world of social contradictions—is the backdrop to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. In growing up, Alice comes from a background in which the Victorian ideals of politeness, propriety, hard work, and honesty are valued greatly. Wonderland, on the other hand, is a world full of fantastical creatures, sensational settings, and gossip. So, when she travels through Wonderland, we consistently see her attempt to reconcile her understanding of the world as a place of logic, justice, and morality with the social norms of Wonderland which are characterized by ambiguity, chaos, contradictions, and absurdity. ♦

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### Moral Expectations

- Acting honestly
- Working hard
- Displaying propriety and politeness
- Practicing frugality
- Performing charitable acts for those less well-off
- Practicing sobriety

### Entertainment

- Scandal sheets (similar to today's tabloids)
- Sensational novels with plots concerning bigamy, murder, and adultery
- Celebrity gossip
- Theatrical productions with special effects depicting burning buildings, collapsing bridges, and simulated waterfalls
- The exhibition of human oddities ("Freak Shows")

## NOTES ON *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* FROM ADAPTOR EVA LE GALLIENNE

**In her foreword** to the 1948 edition of the *Alice in Wonderland* script published by Samuel French, Eva Le Gallienne, one of the two adaptors of the work, describes the process of adapting Carroll's beloved narratives and John Tenniel's illustrations for the stage:

It was not without considerable trepidation that I started to work on my first "Alice" production at the Civic Repertory Theatre. I realized that the word "faithful" must be the keynote of any such venture if it were to find favor with an audience. The love that countless people feel for the "Alice" books amounts to fanaticism, and I felt a deep and solemn responsibility to Carroll, Tenniel [the illustrator of the *Alice* novels], and the Public.

Carroll is not one of those writers for children who become "as children" themselves. He presents the problem as seen by a child, but comments upon it as an adult mathematician on a holiday. Hence the bewildering and fascinating texture of his story; half adventure, half chop-logic and shrewd caricature. This production, therefore, is not designed *primarily* for children. The "pretty-pretty," the "cute" and the "saccharine" must be as drastically eliminated on stage as in the books. They are by no means children's books, in the sense of being "kid-stuff"—on the contrary, it seems to me that no child could possibly appreciate or understand the wit and wisdom of their nonsensical logic. The "adventures" part of the books is of course fascinating to children; the act of going through a looking-glass, of seeing a baby turn into a pig, of talking caterpillars, cats and rabbits, or using flamingoes as croquet mallets, and the hundreds of other strange happenings that make Alice solemnly exclaim: "Curiouser and curiouser!" are as absorbing and delightful. On the other hand, who but a grown-up could possibly appreciate the bitter truth of such a remark as: "Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today!"

It seems to me that a stage presentation of "Alice," in order to be faithful to the books, must appeal equally—though for different reasons—both to children and adults.

Through the use of various devices of modern stagecraft, the action is continuous, Alice never leaving the stage. I felt it important to devise a technical scheme whereby all the places and characters of Alice's dream come to her—that since we experience these adventures through her mind, she must never disappear from our sight.

As far as form goes, Tenniel has succeeded so utterly in his illustrations in familiarizing us with such people as the Duchess, the Cheshire Cat, the Queen of Hearts, the Mad Hatter, and such odd animals as the Dodo, and the Mock Turtle with his "large eyes full of tears," that any version of "Alice" would be unthinkable without them. He has caught to perfection the mixture of fun, irony, sense and nonsense that radiates from Carroll's book. Therefore in the production of all form and line follow faithfully his masterly and famous drawings.

In making the acting version, Florida Friebus and I have *only* used Carroll's dialogue. We have tried to bring in all the most famous and best-loved scenes, merely arranging them to form a whole. [The adaptation] represents much work, a considerable knowledge of stagecraft, and above all a deep love and respect for Carroll and Tenniel, whose combined genius gave the immortal "Alice" to the world. ♦

## A WHOLE NEW WORLD: ALICE IN WONDERLAND AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

### Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychology is the study of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes that we undergo throughout our entire lives—from the day we are born until the day we die. Development, in a psychological sense, has to do with the overall progression of our understanding of the world. Essentially, development is how we become who we are.

Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, became particularly fascinated with the difference in thought processes and cognition between children and adults that he observed in intelligence tests he conducted. In 1936, he became the first psychologist to systematically study cognitive development in children. His findings led to the creation of the Theory of Cognitive Development, which helps explain how children at various ages construct their own mental models of the world.

As part of his work, he theorized that as we grow and as our knowledge grows, we create schemas, or mental frameworks, that help us to interpret information presented by the world around us. Schemas draw upon an individual's existing knowledge of the world and are often composed of images, words, and ideas that the individual associates with a given object or idea. For example, your "doctor schema" might include a white lab coat, a stethoscope, and a thermometer.

As we develop, we are constantly striving to achieve cognitive equilibrium—harmony between our thought processes and our environments. To achieve this harmony, Piaget theorized that we must constantly adapt to new environments and new ideas, and that there are two distinct processes by which we adapt:

- **Assimilation**—this process occurs early in development. When we encounter new or unfamiliar information from our environment, we interpret that information by placing it into schemas that we already have. Essentially, we fit new information into our existing understanding of a subject.
- **Accommodation**—this process occurs later in development, once we have a broader base of knowledge and experiences interacting with the world. In accommodation, our minds are able to make space for and adjust to new information and experiences and to understand them without necessarily fitting them into our existing schemas. ♦



"Giant Alice watching Rabbit run away" by John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 1865.

## ALICE IN WONDERLAND AND DEVELOPMENT

**In his Alice stories,** Lewis Carroll removes Alice from her familiar world and places her in the middle of a new, fantastical world. Because of this, Alice inherently illustrates the key developmental psychological ideas of schema formation, assimilation, and accommodation.

At its core, development is the process that we go through to understand the world. When Alice enters Wonderland, she enters an entirely new world with different sets of social norms and natural laws. Initially, as Alice travels through Wonderland, she has difficulty maintaining cognitive equilibrium—the schemas she created for subjects in her “real” world do not seem to hold up in Wonderland. Cheshire cats vanish and leave their smile behind, flamingos are used as croquet mallets, and Time holds grudges.

As she has more interactions with Wonderland inhabitants, we see Alice begin the process of assimilation. At first, the information in Wonderland does not fit neatly into the schemas Alice has from her familiar world. For example, we see Alice struggle to reach cognitive equilibrium between her existing schemas and her environment when the Mad Hatter sings a familiar song, but with unfamiliar lyrics:

**Mad Hatter:** It was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing “Twinkle, twinkle, little bat, How I wonder what you’re at.” You know the song, perhaps.

**Alice:** I’ve heard something like it.

**Mad Hatter:** It goes on, you know, in this way—“Up above the world you fly Like a tea-tray in the sky.

Eventually, Alice begins to accommodate to Wonderland—or, at least she attempts to. Once she is crowned a queen in Wonderland, the Red Queen poses a question to Alice, to which Alice gives an answer that would appear to fall into the logic schema of Wonderland:

**Red Queen:** Take a bone from a dog: what remains?

**Alice:** The bone wouldn’t remain, of course, if I took it—and the dog wouldn’t remain: it would come to bite me—and I’m sure I shouldn’t remain!

**Red Queen:** Then you think nothing would remain?

**Alice:** I think that’s the answer.

**Red Queen:** Wrong, as usual. The dog’s temper would remain.

Perhaps the most obvious answer to the Red Queen’s question would be that the dog would remain. With her answer, we see Alice illustrate that she has been able to start developing Wonderland schemas by thinking beyond the most obvious answers to questions. While the Red Queen deems Alice’s answer incorrect, it is clear that by the end of Alice’s adventure through Wonderland, she has started to assimilate by developing some framework for the unfamiliar logic on which the world operates. ♦

Edited from:

Yale, Kathleen, et al. *The Growth of Knowledge: Crash Course Psychology #18*. Performance by Hank Green, *Crash Course Psychology*, 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nz2dtv—ok](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nz2dtv—ok).

McLeod, Saul. “Jean Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development.” *Simply Psychology*, Simply Psychology, 6 June 2018, [www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html).



“Alice stretched tall” by John Tenniel, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865.

## THE ROLE OF GAMES IN ALICE IN WONDERLAND

As a mathematician and a logician, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson—more commonly known by his pen name, Lewis Carroll—was fascinated with games. Dodgson was also interested in play, imagination, and storytelling. He would often create fantastical tales to tell the Liddell children, Alice, Lorina, and Edith—the children of the dean of Christ Church college in Oxford where Dodgson worked as a mathematics professor. In his works, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, Dodgson blends his passions for logic, puzzles, fantasy, and play, utilizing games as the narrative framework for Alice's journey through Wonderland.

Alice's experience in Wonderland can be broken down into two distinct parts each characterized by a distinct game that underscores the action of the part.

**Part 1: Cards**—As Alice becomes acquainted with Wonderland, she learns about the Queen of Hearts, a fearsome queen with a tendency to call for anyone to be beheaded for any number of reasons. This queen has a court full of other playing cards. While there are many different games that require cards, in card games, there tends to be an emphasis on hierarchy. That is, certain cards, especially face cards like the Jack, Queen, and King, tend to have more power than others. We see this hierarchy in Wonderland through the way the cards interact with each other and with those around them. These interactions reflect the hierarchical nature of the Victorian society in which Alice lives.

**Part 2: Chess**—After Alice flees from the Queen of Hearts, she travels to a realm that physically resembles a chessboard. With the guidance of the Red Queen, Alice learns that her best course of action through Wonderland is through the squares of the chessboard. Chess, hardly a game of chance, has a dizzying set of rules and regulations. The complexity of the rules of chess, and the even more complex rules of Wonderland chess, mirror the social etiquette of Victorian society. It is only once Alice travels through the chess board squares and essentially "wins" the game that she is able to be crowned a queen, becoming the height of an example of etiquette in Wonderland.

While cards and chess are the most apparent and predominant games in the action of Alice's adventures, other games are at play in Wonderland—the Dodo orchestrates a caucus race, the Queen of Hearts challenges Alice to a game of croquet, and the Mad Hatter proposes numerous riddles. However, the most



"Two, Five, and Seven painting the rosebush" by John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865.

prevalent game in Wonderland is the game of words. Throughout the entirety of her journey in Wonderland, Alice consistently finds herself engaged in games of wit and words. In an essay titled "Playing Around in Lewis Carroll's *Alice Books*," Jan Susina describes the role of wit and words in the *Alice* story:

"The most complicated game that Carroll and Alice play is the game of language itself. The master wordsmith is Humpty Dumpty who, in *Looking-Glass*, makes clear that language is power, and it belongs to those who can use it to their own advantage. A word 'means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.' [...] Carroll uses language to revise and invert meaning to his advantage. As the Mad Hatter warns Alice, language can be very slippery, and one needs to use it very carefully. Saying what you mean is not the same as meaning what you say."

## THE ROLE OF GAMES IN *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* CONTINUED...

Semantics is a distinct branch of linguistics that has to do with the meaning of words. By inverting the traditional notion of semantics, Carroll makes a game out of language—a game with complicated and convoluted rules that Alice never quite wins.

When analyzing the games that are present in Carroll's *Alice* stories, it is important to understand the cultural shift that occurred in Europe in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century regarding childhood. During this time, childhood began to be viewed as a state of freedom, innocence, and exploration. This new view of childhood influenced 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century writers, particularly children's writers. Instead of writing children's novels with the intent that they be purely instructional and centered on a moral, this new view of childhood inspired authors like Lewis Carroll to write narratives that celebrate the innocence, imagination, and play prevalent in the childhood experiences. In this sense, the games in *Alice in Wonderland* are celebrations of the creativity, competitiveness, and curiosity of childhood. ♦

Edited from:

Susina, Jan. "Playing Around in Lewis Carrolls Alice Books." *American Journal of Play*, 2010.

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"Alice trying to play croquet with flamingo and hedgehog" by John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865.

## FANTASTICAL NONSENSE: NONSENSE LITERATURE AND *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

### Nonsense Literature

Nonsense literature is a broad literary genre characterized by apparent senselessness through enigmas and paradoxes. Narratives that fall under the Nonsense Literature category constantly balance meaning with the absence of meaning. This balance of meaning and a lack of meaning is created when the author manipulates the rules of language and logic that we recognize as absolutes in our own world. In changing seemingly absolute rules, nonsense literature both invites readers to analyze the work and avoids the suggestion that there might be a greater meaning to the work beyond the text.

19<sup>th</sup> century authors Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll are considered the founders of the Nonsense Literature genre. Lear, the author of a nonsensical collection of drawings and limericks titled *A Book of Nonsense*, like Carroll was fascinated with the apparent nonsense that emerges from childlike imagination and play.

Elizabeth Sewell, one of the leading theorists on Nonsense Literature describes it as a narrative genre that does not hinge on chance or random events. Instead, she characterizes Nonsense Literature as narratives that exist in “a carefully limited world, controlled and directed by reason,” even if that reason is completely unfamiliar to us.

### Nonsense Literature and *Alice in Wonderland*

Wonderland does not abide by the laws of logic and sense to which we and Alice are accustomed. In Wonderland, croquet is played with flamingoes as mallets, cards speak, Time is a physical being, and books are written backwards. The realm operates on a complex, seemingly nonsensical set of rules. Alice is quick to notice that the rules of this new world are different than those of her familiar world, but she struggles to decipher patterns that could help her predict and understand how life works in Wonderland. That is, she struggles to make sense of her experiences and interactions. In this way, she acts as a voice for the audience—noting how curious and strange this new nonsensical place is.

However, there is a set of rules in Wonderland, as hidden and ambiguous as the set of rules may be. In her work on Nonsense Literature, Elizabeth Sewell uses the *Alice* stories as prime examples of the genre. Sewell describes the nonsense world of Carroll’s *Alice* stories as a set of elaborate literary games that follow a fixed set of rules—games made of language where words often become the object of play. Sewell argues that rather than being chaotic, Nonsense Literature actually forms a surprisingly

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“You may call it ‘nonsense’ if you like, but I’ve heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!”

—Red Queen, Act 2, Scene 1

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“White Rabbit, dressed as herald, blowing trumpet” by John Tenniel, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865.

## FANTASTICAL NONSENSE CONTINUED...

orderly world, just the type of place where a mathematician, like Carroll, would feel at home—a world that follows its own prescribed set of rules. ♦

Edited from:

Susina, Jan. "Playing Around in Lewis Carrolls Alice Books." *American Journal of Play*, 2010.

"Chapter 2: Definition and Typology." *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense*, by Wim Tigges, Rodopi, 2013.



"Mad Hatter arrives hastily in court to testify" by John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865.



## ALICE AND THE HERO'S JOURNEY

**At their core**, all stories are about journeys. They pose the question: how do we change or rise to the occasion in the face of particular obstacles? At the heart of every journey is a hero who sets out on a quest, whether to recover a stolen item, to find a new home, or to gain new insights into the world. In pursuit of their quest, the hero is met with many challenges. They usually find a mentor or group of friends as they travel through unfamiliar territory, and they typically succeed, to some extent, in their quest. While the hero's journey is an archetype for epic poetry—one that is seen in *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, and *The Aeneid*—it has become an archetypal structure for all kinds of stories. Stories like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *The Lion King*, and *Alice in Wonderland* all follow the structure of the hero's journey.

Joseph Campbell, a literary scholar who specialized in the study of comparative mythology articulated an archetypal series of steps of a hero's journey:

**1. The Ordinary World:** The hero's home, the safe place where the hero has a typical way of life.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice's ordinary world is that of Victorian Era England. At the start of the narrative, Alice plays imaginative games with her cat, Dinah, in the drawing room of her home.

**2. The Call to Adventure:** The hero is issued a challenge or a quest. This call sets the story into motion by disrupting the comfort of the hero's ordinary world.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice is called to adventure when she notices that the mirror in her drawing room has become a portal. Her curiosity compels her to step through the portal.

**3. The Refusal of the Call:** At this stage, the hero is reluctant to accept the challenge or quest issued. The reluctance typically stems from fear of the dangers the quest presents and fear of failure.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, this step occurs when Alice becomes frustrated after she spots a small door that leads to a beautiful garden that she is too big to enter. While she is not necessarily reluctant to take the call to adventure, at this point, her size appears to be an insurmountable obstacle in the way of her journey.

**4. Encouragement to Take the Call:** The hero encounters a mentor who encourages the hero to take the call to adventure.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice discovers a table near the small door with a key to the door and a vial with a tag that says "Drink Me." The vial's tag encourages Alice to drink from the vial.

**5. Crossing the First Threshold:** The stage in which the hero finally commits to the journey and departs from their ordinary world.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice drinks from the vial and changes size.

**6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies:** No longer in their ordinary world, the hero must learn the rules of the special world. The hero faces tests, encounters allies, and challenges enemies. In this stage, the hero learns who can be trusted.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice encounters a wide variety of Wonderland inhabitants including a Dodo bird, a talking Caterpillar, a disgraced Duchess, a vanishing Cheshire Cat, a Mad Hatter, and a March Hare. Each Wonderland creature she meets challenges the way she thinks about logic, language, and sense.

**7. Approach to the Inmost Cave:** At this stage, the hero prepares to enter the heart of the journey. They have withstood tests and challenges, and now strategize how they will attain the journey's reward.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, this stage occurs when Alice meets the Queen of Hearts, who has the tendency to sentence anyone to be beheaded for any reason at all.

**8. Ordeal:** The central life-and-death crisis during which the hero faces real danger. It is the hero's most challenging test yet, and they teeter on the brink of failure.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, this occurs when Alice attends the trial of the Knave of Hearts. During the trial, she becomes frustrated with the apparent lack of logic and justice of the trial. When Alice cries out that the system is unjust, the Queen of Hearts sentences Alice to be beheaded.

**9. Reward:** The hero retrieves the reward they have sought.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, this occurs when Alice meets the Red Queen, who promises Alice that she can become a queen in Wonderland. Throughout the narrative, Alice has demonstrated a competitive nature, constantly engaging in games and comparing herself to her friend from her ordinary world, Mabel. The prospect of becoming a queen, gaining power and status, is a great reward for Alice.

**10. Road Back to the Ordinary World:** The hero must return to the ordinary world. The road back may challenge the hero. An event should prompt the hero to begin their return and re-establish the central dramatic question of the story.

## ALICE AND **THE HERO'S JOURNEY** CONTINUED...

In *Alice in Wonderland*, this step encompasses Alice's journey through the squares of the chessboard on her way to becoming queen. During her road back, Alice encounters Wonderland creatures such as the Guard, the White Queen, Tweedledee and Tweedledum, and Humpty Dumpty, who challenge Alice's understanding of the concepts of right and wrong.

**11. Resurrection:** This is the hero's most dangerous meeting with death. The hero must apply all they have learned in their journey. Others' lives may be at stake, and the hero must prove their heroic status. This stage also represents a cleansing. The hero is reborn as they re-enter the ordinary world.

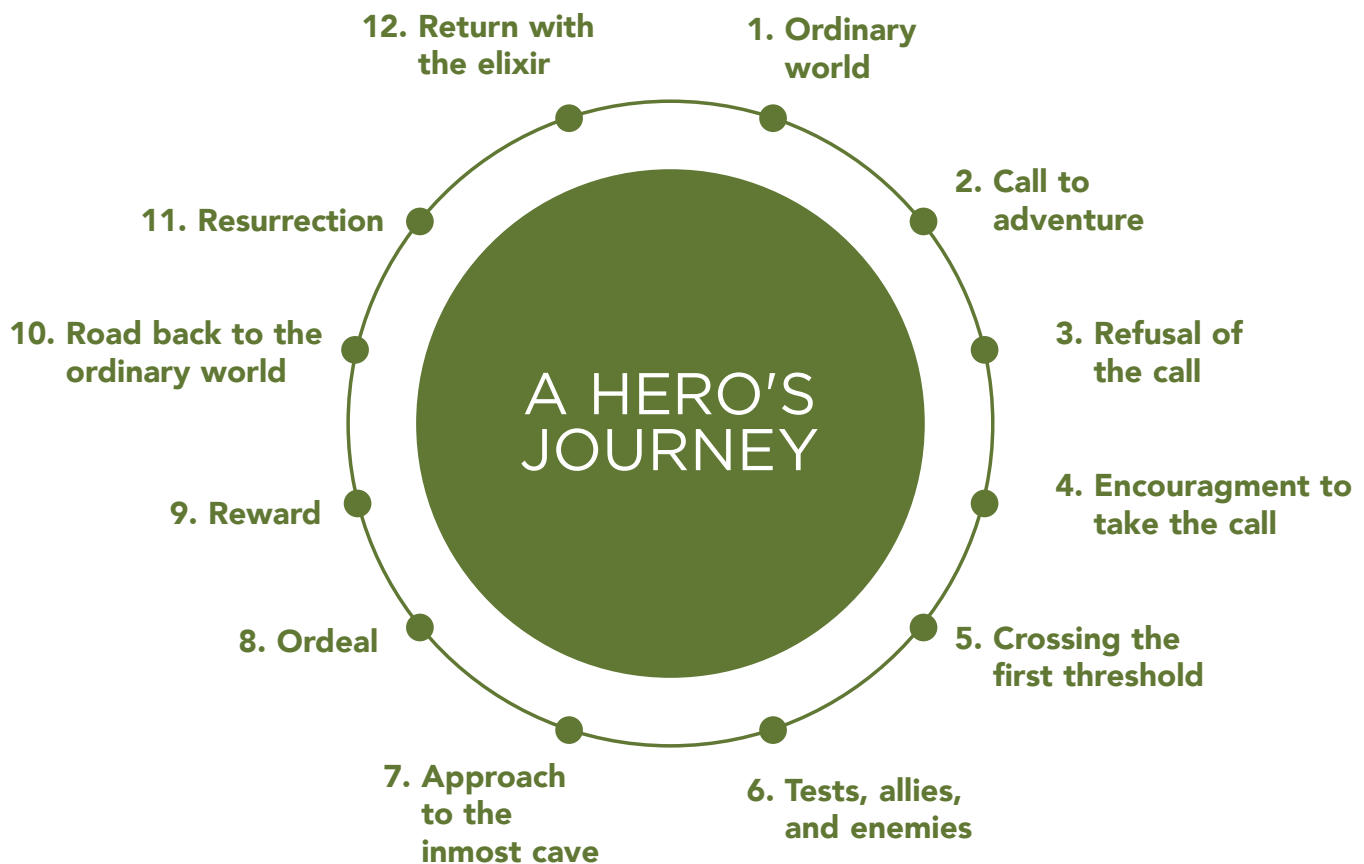
In *Alice in Wonderland*, this step occurs when Alice reaches the eighth square of the chessboard and is crowned queen. However, once she is crowned queen, Alice quickly realizes that she still is unable to grasp the logic of Wonderland. Overwhelmed with her new power, Alice wishes to be back in her ordinary world.

**12. Return with the Elixir:** The final stage of a hero's journey. The hero returns to the ordinary world and claims their greatest reward. During this stage, the hero shares the elixir of their journey with others. This elixir could be a physical potion or reward, or it could be newfound wisdom, love, or experience.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, this occurs when Alice wakes up in her ordinary world only to discover that her journey through Wonderland was a dream. ♦

Edited from:

"Interpretations of Joseph Campbell and the Hero's Journey." *The Hero's Journey*, msu.edu/~jdowell/pdf/JosephCampbellPathHero.pdf.



## THEMES

### CURIOSITY AND IMAGINATION

Alice's journey into and through Wonderland is driven by her wild imagination and innate sense of curiosity. Even before she leaves her familiar, ordinary world of Victorian England, we see that Alice's curiosity and imagination dominate the way she interacts with the world—she personifies her pet cat, Dinah, sets up elaborate games for herself, and builds imaginary worlds in her mind. Once the mirror in her drawing room transforms into a portal, and Alice's imaginary world appears to become real, her curiosity and her desire for knowledge compel her to step through the portal and into Wonderland.

Once in the new realm, Alice's curiosity continues to drive her interactions with Wonderland and its creatures. Desperate to grasp the rules of the land, Alice becomes quite inquisitive, consistently questioning those she meets about the realm and its logic. When she encounters information or experiences that run counter to her expectations, Alice deems the information or experiences as "curious." For example, after eating a piece of cake with a tag that reads "Eat Me," Alice begins to grow quite quickly. In response to her sudden change in size, Alice exclaims that the situation is "curiouser and curiouser!" Instead of dismissing many of her Wonderland experiences as absurd or illogical, Alice demonstrates that her desire to learn is stronger than her instinct to pass judgement. The use of the word "curious" to describe Alice's unusual, confusing, and often absurd experiences in Wonderland, emphasizes her inherent desire for knowledge and understanding.

Alice's imagination is powerful—after all, she creates the entirety of Wonderland in a dream. Regardless of the logic of the realm, that Alice, in her unconscious, is able to craft the complex world of Wonderland emphasizes the sheer strength and intricacy of her imagination.

### LOGIC AND MADNESS

**Cheshire Cat:** We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.

**Alice:** How do you know that I'm mad?

**Cheshire Cat:** You must be or you wouldn't have come here.

—Act 1, Scene 7

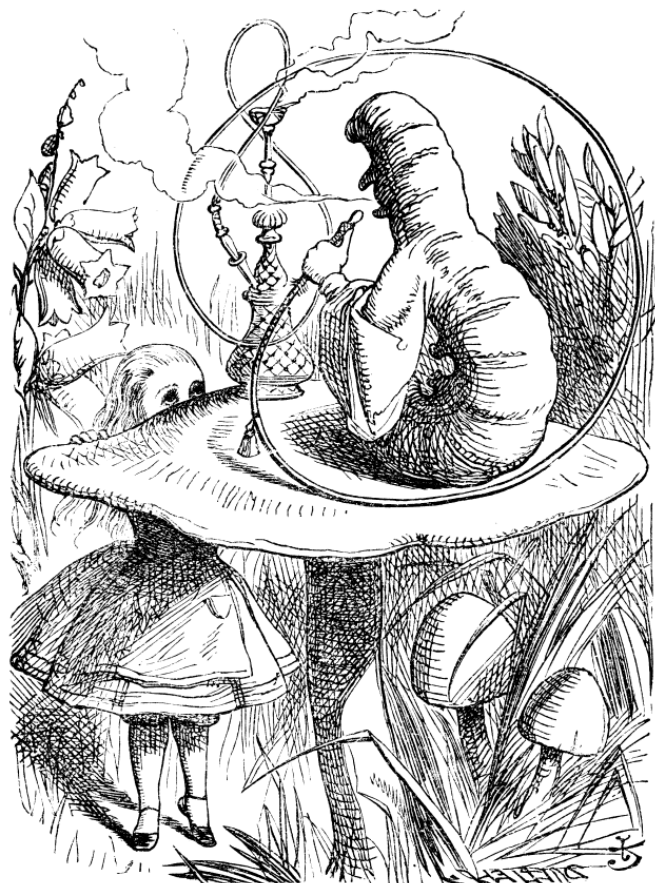
Logic, as Alice has come to know it in her familiar world, does not seem to exist as she knows it in Wonderland. Instead, the world operates under a set of warped logic and rules. As a young girl in the Victorian Era, Alice comes from a realm in which logic and reason are considered to be of the utmost importance. In this world,

"Well, I've often seen a cat without a grin, but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!"

—Alice, Act 1, Scene 7

there are definitive rights and definitive wrongs. Time progresses in a predictable fashion. Numbers follow suit. None of that is the case in Wonderland.

In Wonderland, logic appears to be convoluted and reversed, if not completely lacking. As Alice travels through the squares of the chessboard, she



A picture of a caterpillar smoking a hookah. This image is artwork by John Tenniel, accompanying an edition of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll.

## THEMES CONTINUED...

meets Tweedledee and Tweedledum. As they speak, Tweedledee describes the obscure way in which logic works in Wonderland:

“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.”

—Act 2, Scene 3

Throughout her time in Wonderland, Alice struggles with the logic of the land. In Alice’s familiar world, logic and madness exist on opposite ends of the logic spectrum—that is, a person is either logical or mad. In Wonderland however, logic and madness appear to be interdependent. The logic of Wonderland is madness and madness in Wonderland is logical. That madness and logic in Wonderland exists harmoniously highlights the importance of both intellectual states and suggests that there is great power in the balance between them.

### TRANSFORMATION AND LOSS OF INNOCENCE

“I wonder if I’ve changed in the night. Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember being a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I?”

—Alice, Act 1, Scene 2

In her journey through Wonderland, Alice undergoes a number of transformations, physically and intellectually. Alice’s many changes emphasize an overall loss of innocence that accompanies the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Alice begins her journey with drastic physical changes. When she steps through the looking glass in her drawing room, Alice notices a table on which sits a key and a vial with a tag that reads “Drink Me.” Alice drinks from the vial, and when she does, she begins to shrink drastically. Once she is small, she realizes that she accidentally left the key she needs on the table and is now too small to reach it. However, when she is small, she notices a piece of cake with a tag that reads “Eat Me” lying under the table. Alice eats the cake and begins to grow quickly until she is quite large. Finally, she begins to shrink on her own once more until she is only about three inches tall. These physical transformations disorient Alice, and prompt her to question her own identity.

Later, as Alice continues on her journey through Wonderland’s chessboard, she undergoes an intellectual transformation when she meets Tweedledee and Tweedledum. As she comes upon the twins’ square, Tweedledee and Tweedledum tell Alice the story of the Walrus and the Carpenter. In the story, the Walrus

and the Carpenter befriend a large group of oysters. The oysters all trust the Walrus and the Carpenter, however the Walrus and the Carpenter ultimately betray the oysters when they decide to kill and eat them. In response to the story, Alice says:

**Alice:** I like the Walrus best, because you see he was a *little* sorry for the poor oysters.

**Tweedledee:** He ate more than the Carpenter though. You see he held his handkerchief in front so that the Carpenter couldn’t count how many he took: contrariwise.

**Alice:** That was mean! Then I like the Carpenter best... if he didn’t eat so many as the Walrus.

**Tweedledum:** But he ate as many as he could get.

**Alice:** Well! They were *both* very unpleasant characters.

—Act 2, Scene 3

Until this point, Alice has been under the innocent impression that the world—both her familiar world and Wonderland—can be divided into two categories: good and bad. However, with this story, Alice begins to see the breakdown of the moral binary. That is, she begins to see a gray area in the question of who is good and who is bad. This particular intellectual transformation emphasizes the loss of innocence that accompanies the acquisition of knowledge. ♦

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### BOOKS:

Carroll, Lewis, and John Tenniel. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Arcturus, 2018.

Carroll, Lewis, et al. *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. Inky Parrot Press, 2018.

Carroll, Lewis. *A Tangled Tale*. General Books, 2010.

Carroll, Lewis. *Symbolic Logic and The Game of Logic; Mathematical Recreations of Lewis Carroll*. Dover Publications, 1972.

Lough, George J. "Alice in Wonderland and Cognitive Development: Teaching with Examples." *Journal of Adolescence*, 1983, pp. 305–315.

### ARTICLES:

Darton, F. H., "Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life." *Cambridge: Cambridge UP*, 1932.

Hill, Jane H., and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini. "Language and Learning: The Debate between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky." *Language*, vol. 57, no. 4, 1981, p. 948., doi:10.2307/414255.

Lough, George J. "Alice in Wonderland and Cognitive Development: Teaching with Examples." *Journal of Adolescence*, 1983, pp. 305–315.

Susina, Jan. "Playing Around in Lewis Carrolls Alice Books." *American Journal of Play*, 2010.

### FILMS:

*Alice in Wonderland* (1903) directed by Cecil Hepworth and Percy Stow—silent, live-action film

*Alice in Wonderland* (1931) directed by Bud Pollard—live-action film

*Alice in Wonderland* (1951) directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske—Disney animated film

*Alice in Wonderland* (1985) directed by Harry Harris premieres—TV movie

*Alice in Wonderland* (1999) directed by Nick Willing premieres—TV movie

*Alice in Wonderland* (2010) directed by Tim Burton—Disney live-action film

*Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016) directed by James Bobin—Disney live-action film

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

*A Tangled Tale* by Lewis Carroll full text from Project Gutenberg:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/29042/29042-h/29042-h.htm>

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll full text from Project Gutenberg:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11/11-h/11-h.htm>

*Through the Looking-Glass* by Lewis Carroll full text from Project Gutenberg:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12/12-h/12-h.htm>

The Growth of Knowledge: Crash Course Psychology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nz2dtv--ok>

## ABOUT **A NOISE WITHIN**

**A NOISE WITHIN** A Noise Within produces classic theatre as an essential means to enrich our community by embracing universal human experiences, expanding personal awareness, and challenging individual perspectives. Our company of resident and guest artists performing in rotating repertory immerses student and general audiences in timeless, epic stories in an intimate setting.

Our most successful art asks our community to question beliefs, focus on relationships, and develop self-awareness. Southern California audiences of all ages and backgrounds build community together while engaging with this most visceral and primal of storytelling techniques. ANW's production of classic theatre includes all plays we believe will be part of our cultural legacy. We interpret these stories through the work of a professional resident company—a group of artists whose work is critical to their community—based on the belief that trust among artists and between artists and audience can only be built through an honest and continuing dialogue. Our plays will be performed in rotating repertory, sometimes simultaneously in multiple spaces, and buttressed by meaningful supporting programs to create a symphonic theatrical experience for artists and audience.

In its 27 year history, A Noise Within has garnered over 500 awards and commendations, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle's revered Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the coveted Margaret Hartford Award for Sustained Excellence.

More than 45,000 individuals attend productions at a Noise Within annually. In addition, the theatre draws over 18,000 student participants to its arts education program. Students benefit from in-classroom workshops, conservatory training, subsidized tickets to matinee and evening performances, post-performance discussions with artists, and free standards-based study guides.

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