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Family Plays

Lewis Carroll's
*Through the
Looking Glass
and
What Alice Found there*
Adapted by
Rosemary Nursey-Bray



Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There

**This imaginative stage version premiered at
Hartley College in Magill, South Australia.**

Fantasy. Adapted by Rosemary Nursey-Bray. From Lewis Carroll's classic. Cast: 9+ (2m., 3w., 4+ either gender) with doubling or up to 35+ (4m., 5w., 26+ either gender). One sleepy afternoon while playing chess by herself, Alice sees the real Red Queen through the looking glass. Alice enters the looking glass into a world of strange back-to-front magic. Stepping through the mirror, she meets the kings and queens of her chess set. The world inside the glass is marked out as a chess board, across which she must travel as a pawn. She meets talking flowers, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, sees Humpty Dumpty fall from his wall, meets the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, and witnesses the furious battle between the Lion and the Unicorn fighting for the crown. The gentle White Knight rescues her from the cruel Red Knight, as she is able to reach the eighth square and become queen. Or is it all a dream? Production notes are available in the script containing illustrations of set design and layout. Single set. Optional use of puppets and black light theatre interludes. Fantasy costumes. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Music in book. Code: TM2.



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and What Alice Found There

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Adapted by

ROSEMARY NURSEY-BRAY

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& WHAT ALICE FOUND THERE)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

**For Lulu and Tony, Gareth and Owen,
With my love.**

The play was first produced by Hartley College Drama Department, Lorne Avenue, Magill, South Australia in May 1980 with the following company. My sincere thanks and affection go to them all for making the play a success.

Going Through the Looking Glass

Alice	Sue Swanson
Musicians	Tom Giles
"	Bill Odgers
"	Andre Oosterbaan
"	Stephen Swift
"	Roman Turkiewicz
Red King	Rosetta Piro
Red Queen	Andrea Assiotti
White King	Hedley Buxton
White Queen	Mary Howie

The Second Square: The Garden of Live Flowers

Tiger Lily	Libby Lehmann
Rose	Rosa Garcia
Daisies	Judy Ditter
"	Sue Goedecke
"	Nola Flentjar
Violets	Mary Grigoriou
"	Sue Stempel

The Third Square: The Railway Journey

Guard	Robert Benporath
Gentleman Dressed in White Papers	Michael Urdanoff
Goat	Ingrid Omenzetter
Horse	Caroline Marquis

The Fourth Square: The Wood Where Things Have No Name

Tweedledum	Ian Martlew
Tweedledee	Lee Scottney-Turbill
The Walrus	Libby Lehmann
The Carpenter	Ingrid Omenzetter
Oysters, Sun, Moon, etc.	Sylvia Eliseo
"	Christopher Long

Jabberwocky

Voice	Max Mastrosavas
Slithy Toves	Mary Grigoriou
"	Sue Stempel
Mimsy Borogoves	Hedley Buxton
"	Caroline Marquis
Mome Raths	Judy Ditter
"	
"	Ingrid Omenzetter
The Young Man	Sue Goedecke
The Old Man	Rosetta Piro
The Jub-Jub Bird	Sylvia Eliseo
The Frumious Bandersnatch	Christopher Long
The Jabberwock	Libby Lehmann
"	Rosa Garcia

The Fifth Square: Wool and Water

The Sixth Square: Humpty Dumpty's Square

Humpty Dumpty	Ian Martlew
All the King's Men	Sue Goedecke
"	Mary Grigoriou
"	Rosetta Piro
"	Sue Stempel
The March Hare	Stephen Swift
The Mad Harter	Judy Ditter
The Lion	Rosa Garcia
The Unicorn	Noia Flentjar

The Seventh Square: The Forest

The White Knight	Michael Urdanoff
The Red Knight	Caroline Marquis

The Eighth Square: Queen Alice's Banqueting Hall

The Frog	Hedley Buxton
Leg of Mutton	played by himself
Plum Pudding	played by himself

and everybody else!!

Directed by Rosemary Nursey-Bray
 Design Max Mastrovas
 assisted by Sam Harvey
 " Gaynor Petrilli
 Poster Max Mastrovas
 Music by Stephen Swift and
 " Andre Oosterbaan
 Lighting Design Lee Scottney-Turbill
 Stage Manager Vicki Sugars
 Costume Mistress Katrina McPeake
 Props Mistress Wendy Todd

All assisted by —

Sandra Ayache	Max Mastrovas
Hedley Buxton	Sue Neck
Carmel Byrt	Jenny Nielsen
Sylvia Eliseo	Sandra Niscioli
Rosa Garcia	Tony Parletta
Sam Harvey	Carolyn Reeves
Irene Kresnicka	Sue Stempel
Libby Lehmann	Susan Wardleworth
Christopher Long	

Puppetry Hedley Buxton
" Sylvia Eliseo
" Libby Lehmann
" Christopher Long
" Caroline Marquis
" Ingrid Omenzetter

Lighting Lee Scottney-Turbill
" Robert Benporath
" Irene Kresnicka
" Tony Parletta
" Ian Martlew

Technical Adviser Ken O'Neill
Theatre Manager Ken O'Neill
Front of House Ursula Burchett

My special thanks to Andre Oosterbaan of the College's Music Department for organizing the music, and to Stephen Swift for writing us such a delightful theme.

My special thanks also to my husband for his constructive criticism and support. And to my children for their devastatingly honest comments and suggestions.

And to Ursula Burchett and Marilyn Goode for their unfailing patience and intelligence in deciphering, typing and retyping this script.

And last, but not least, to Max Mastrosavas whose effective designs for both puppets and people meticulously executed, made the play visually stunning.

FOR GROWN-UPS OF ALL AGES

In this adaptation I have tried to keep the script as close as possible to the text of Lewis Carroll's book. I have used as much of the original dialogue as I could, cutting it when I thought it too involved to be interesting when staged for children, and cutting only those events too difficult to present in a theatre. I have not simplified the language, believing that the action makes clear the difficult words, and Carroll's language is too precise and beautiful to spoil.

I have tried to bring out certain themes. I see the main theme as a parable of Alice's journey from being a child (a pawn) through childhood and its perplexities, surprises and reversals, to her maturing (becoming a Queen).

Nobody in the story is very nice to Alice (with the possible exception of the White Knight). She is constantly challenged, her confidence threatened. She is asked what she is and who she is, told that she does not conform and that she is fading already. She is advised to remember who she is before she really knows herself; she is told she is stupid and rude. Humpry Dumpry denies her a sense of her own individuality by assuring her that she is so like everyone else that he'd never recognize her if they met again. She is disoriented by the peculiar back-to-front logic of Looking Glass land, the worst manifestations of which are perhaps that she is not sure whether it is she or the unicorn who is the mythical beast, and does not know whether she is herself dreaming the sequence of events or is only a part of the Red King's dream.

Alice, however, is a survivor. After all the attacks on her psyche she jumps happily and confidently into the last square and becomes a Queen, an adult. During the play she has passed through each challenge and conflict growing in experience and the maturity which it brings; gaining understanding and strength to cope with life.

'Through the Looking Glass' is written in such a way that the main characters are all part of a chess game. There are many fights in the book where pieces take each other. Another theme I have tried to bring out is that life is conflict, as a chess game is conflict, and Alice must face discord and strife and learn how to resolve it or come to terms with it during her passage through childhood.

The game of chess has very strict rules. Alice learns that life is like this too: there are moves that she may not make, laws that she may not transgress; she is confined within a narrow framework. She tries to feel out the boundaries of what is acceptable behavior. She tries to learn how to function in a social environment.

By the adults surrounding her Alice is confused, treated in a very off-hand manner, scolded, praised, informed, transported from place to place in a way which has no outward logic to her. Perhaps it is worth reflecting that her experiences through the Looking Glass do genuinely parallel the experience of many children who are pushed through life by parents too busy to explain what is going on, too preoccupied to listen and sort out a child's mis-conceptions, too tired to realize that a child needs help to find an order in things. Alice learns how to handle many things in the course of the story. By Looking Glass logic, an adult watching her struggles learns even more about how *not* to handle children.

CAST in order of appearance

Alice
Red King
Red Queen
White King
White Queen

Tiger Lily
Rose
Daisies
Violets

Guard
Gentleman dressed in White Papers
Goat
Horse

Tweedledum
Tweedledee

Humpty Dumpty
The King's Men

March Hare
Mad Hatter
The Lion
The Unicorn

The Red Knight
The White Knight
The Frog footman

Apart from Alice and the Kings and Queens, all the parts can be doubled.

CAST OF PUPPET SHOW (*optional*)

The Walrus and the Carpenter — Glove and rod puppets

The Walrus
The Carpenter
The eldest oyster
Little oysters
The Sun
The Moon
Clouds
Birds

The Jabberwocky — Black Theatre

Voice to say poem
Old Man
Young Man
Slithy Toves
Mimsy Borogoves
Mome Raths
The Jub-Jub Bird
The Frumious Bandersnatch
The Jabberwock (*2 people*)

SCENES

Going Through the Looking-Glass

The Second Square: The Garden of Live Flowers

The Third Square: The Railway Journey

The Fourth Square: The Wood Where Things Have No Name

The Fifth Square: Wool and Water

The Sixth Square: Humpty Dumpty's Square

The Seventh Square: The Forest

The Eighth Square: Queen Alice's Banqueting Hall

Design

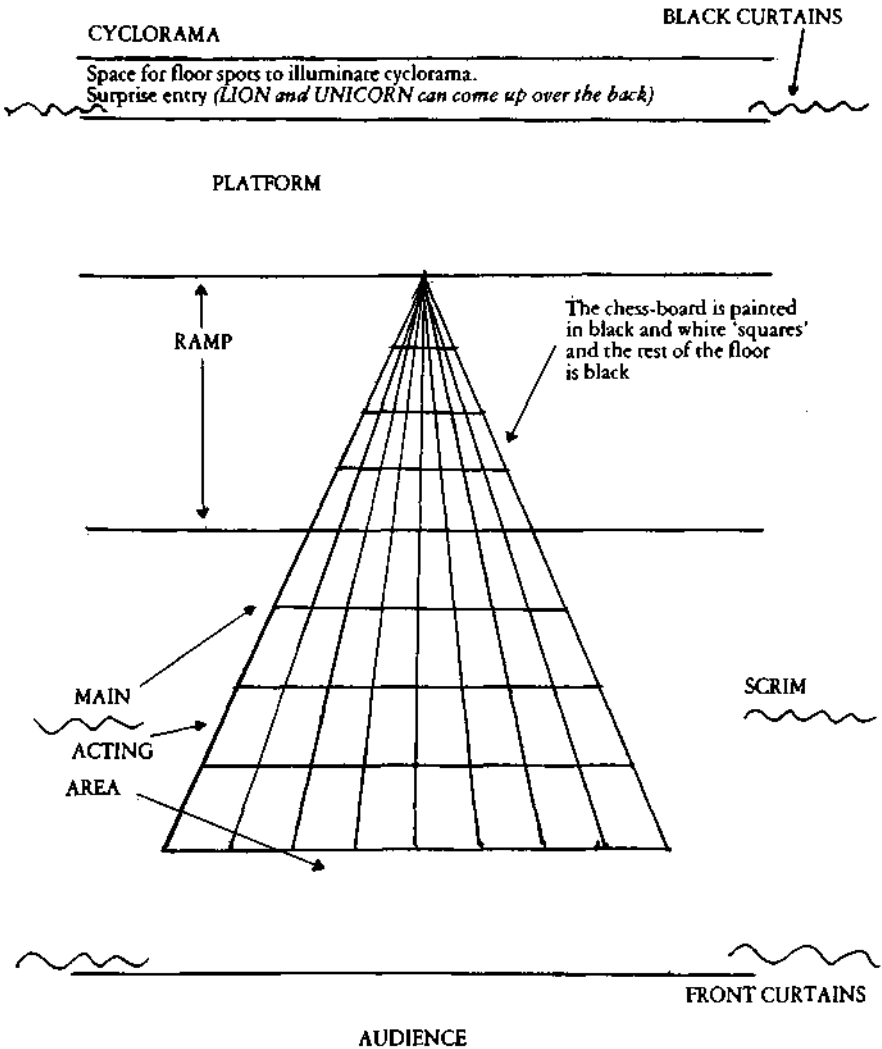
The original production used designs based on the work of Sir John Tenniel published in Carroll's book in 1871. Where no illustrations were published (as in the case of many creatures in the 'Jabberwocky') we used Humpty Dumpty's descriptions from the text of the book, and our own imaginations. Some design details are printed from p.61 onwards.

The set should be very simple. The original production used a platform right across the stage in front of the cyclorama, and a ramp the whole width of the stage led down from this to the main downstage playing area. A stage cloth covered the entire floor on which was painted a chess board in black and white but in a false perspective so that the back squares almost met in a point at the top of the ramp. This gave a feeling of depth to the stage area. It is useful to erect a scrim curtain with a central opening. A colour-slide of a Victorian mirror can be projected onto this, and the Red Queen and King can poke their heads through the central vent and appear in the mirror. Alice can go through the Looking Glass then very easily.

If the 'Jabberwocky' is included, there must be black curtains that can be pulled across the cyclorama and a black cloth that can be unrolled to cover the white squares on the floor.

The Stage directions given in this script assume the production is taking place in the setting described above. Other directors could stage it quite differently and quite as effectively.

DIAGRAM OF SET



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS AND WHAT ALICE FOUND THERE

Going Through the Looking Glass

(Overture: "To the Looking Glass World". When the lights come up we see ALICE sitting in a beautiful blue Victorian armchair. In front of her is a small Victorian table set with a black and white chess-board on which red and white chess pieces are arranged as if a game is in progress.)

A scrim curtain is down and a colour-slide of a Victorian looking-glass is projected onto the middle of this.

ALICE is playing chess with herself. She talks to a black kitten puppet which she wears on her left hand.)

ALICE: Come on Kitty, it's your move. You do take a long time deciding. I'm getting very sleepy, just sitting here, waiting for you. *(She yawns.)* Are you feeling sulky because I put you in check just now? It wasn't Check-Mate you know, so you haven't lost yet. You look very sulky. You look just like the Red Queen. Look!

(She picks up the Red Queen chess piece and holds the kitten and Red Queen face-to-face.)

Good afternoon, Your Majesty! Are you looking sulky because I moved you just now? You shouldn't you know. Queens have all the freedom in the world to come and go, not like the poor little pawns who can only move one step at a time! Cheer up! Look at yourself in the Looking Glass, and you'll see how cross you look!

(She puts the kitten-puppet on the table and holds the Red Queen up to the Looking Glass. Fanfare. The face of the real RED QUEEN pokes through the opening of the scrim in the middle of the glass.)

ALICE: Good Heavens! There's a real Red Queen through the Looking Glass!

(Another fanfare. The RED QUEEN disappears.)

Oh, if only I could go through into the Looking Glass House. I'm sure it's got, oh! such beautiful things in it! Has it, your Majesty? *(to the chess piece)*

(She puts the Queen back on the table)

Let's pretend the glass has gone all soft like gauze so I can get through. *(Magic music sounds. The mirror fades and glows, fades and glows.)* Why it's turning into a sort of mist now, I declare! It'll be easy enough to get through. Why, the glass is beginning to melt away, just like a bright silvery mist!

I am going through the Looking Glass! Through the Looking Glass.

(The slide fades, a strobe light comes on, the cyclorama is illuminated behind the scrim with moving patterns of colour. ALICE feels her way through the looking-glass. The scrim parts. ALICE falls up the ramp. The strobe stops.)

THE SECOND SQUARE: THE GARDEN OF LIVE FLOWERS

(There is a magnificent fanfare. On the platform at the top of the ramp we see the RED KING and QUEEN and the WHITE KING and QUEEN in silhouette, standing on their pedestals, poised and motionless. The two KINGS are together in the centre.)

There is a roll of drums. The figures get down from their pedestals and start to move forward. They are quite menacing. The KINGS take large steps at the same time and a drum-beat accompanies them. The QUEENS take smaller steps and appear to be moving faster. As they advance the lighting goes up to reveal them.)

RED KING: What is it?

WHITE KING: It's a volcano! *(ALICE turns from one to the other.)*

RED QUEEN: It's a tornado!

WHITE QUEEN: It's a human child!

RED KING: What does it want?

WHITE KING: What is it doing here?

WHITE QUEEN: It might be quite nice when you get to know it!

RED QUEEN: Well, it's got to grow up yet—it's still only a pawn. It must cross the board to be a queen—and then it may be worth talking to!

ALICE: My chess pieces have come alive! They're as big as I am!

And they move about by themselves.

(The KINGS and QUEENS move about symmetrically.)

ALICE: Excuse me, Your Majesty. Would you tell me please. . .

(Every time she goes to speak to one they turn away. They finally move up the ramp again and with a roll of drums get back on their pedestals and pose again.)

ALICE: Oh, dear, they're going away. And I did so want to talk to them!

(Magic music. The lights fade except for a spot on ALICE. The KINGS and QUEENS go out, and the FLOWERS come on. ALICE is now in a garden. There is a tree upstage centre. The cyclorama turns blue. It is a beautiful sunlit afternoon.)

TIGER-LILY: Talk to me.

ALICE: What! Oh! I'm in a garden! Oh, Tiger-Lily, I thought I heard you talk!

TIGER-LILY: *I can* talk. When there's anybody worth talking to!

ALICE: And can *all* the flowers talk?

TIGER-LILY: As well as *you* can. And a great deal louder!

ROSE: It isn't manners for us to begin, you know, and I really was wondering when you'd speak! Said I to myself, 'Her face has got *some* sense in it, though it's not a clever one!' Still, you're the right colour, and that goes a long way.

TIGER-LILY: I don't care about the colour. If only her petals curled up a little more, she'd be all right. *(She holds up ALICE's hair.)*

ALICE: Aren't you sometimes frightened at being planted out here, with nobody to take care of you?

ROSE: There's the tree in the middle. What else is it good for?

(She points out over the audience. ALICE finally realizes that the tree is in fact in the opposite direction.)

ALICE: But what could it do if any danger came?

ROSE: It could bark.

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

(They all laugh and shout.)

Didn't you know that? She's very stupid! etc.

DAISY 2: Didn't you know *that*?

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

ALICE: Never mind! If you don't hold your tongues, I'll pick you!
(Horror. A short silence.)

TIGER-LILY: That's right! The daisies are worst of all. When one speaks, they all begin together, and its enough to make one wither to hear the way they go on!

ALICE: *(Changing the subject)* How is it you can all talk so nicely? I've been in many gardens before, but none of the flowers could talk.

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

ALICE: It's very hard.

TIGER-LILY: In most gardens they make the beds too soft—so that the flowers are always asleep.

(They all rock with laughter.)

ALICE: I never thought of that before!

ROSE: It is *my* opinion that you never think *at all*.

VIOLET: *(Peeping out from the leaves)* I never saw anybody that looked stupider!

TIGER-LILY: Hold your tongue! As if *you* ever saw *anybody*! You keep your head under the leaves, and snore away there, till you know no more what's going on in the world, than if you were a bud!

(She snorts and claws in their direction.)

ALICE: (*Changing the subject again*) Are there any more little girls in the garden besides me?

ROSE: There's one other flower in the garden that moves about like you. She has the same awkward shape, but she's more bushy and redder—and her petals are shorter, I think.

TIGER-LILY: They're done up close, like a dahlia, not tumbled about like yours.

DAISIES: Ugh! Yuk! etc.

ROSE: But that's not *your* fault. You're beginning to fade, you know—and then one can't help one's petals getting a little untidy.

ALICE: I'm not fading. I haven't even *bloomed*! Does she ever come out here?

ROSE: I daresay you'll see her soon. She's one of the kind that has nine spikes, you know.

ALICE: Where does she wear them?

ROSE: Why, all round her head, of course. (*They all laugh at ALICE again.*) I was wondering *you* hadn't got some too. I thought it was the regular rule.

(*A drum beat sounds.*)

VIOLETS: (*Ears to the ground*) She's coming! I hear her footstep, thump, thump, along the gravel-walk.

(*They all point upstage left.*)

ALICE: I think I'll go and meet her.

(*She goes towards upstage left.*)

ROSE: You can't possibly meet her if you go in *that* direction. I should advise you to walk the other way.

TIGER-LILY: This is Looking Glass land you know! Everything is back-to-front here. You have to walk *away* from something to move *towards* it.

DAISIES: Didn't she know that! How stupid she is!

ALICE: Surely that can't be right! Well, I'll *try* walking *away* from her and see what happens.

(She walks backwards towards downstage right. The drum beat gets louder. The RED QUEEN stomps on through the audience, and bumps into ALICE. Big crash!)

RED QUEEN: Where do you come from? And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time.

(She smacks ALICE's hands.)

ALICE: I'm sorry, but I think I've lost my way.

RED QUEEN: I don't know what you mean by *your* way. All the ways about here belong to *me*—but why did you come out here at all? Curtsey while you're thinking what to say. It saves time.

(The RED QUEEN looks at her watch.)

RED QUEEN: It's time for your answer now. Open your mouth a *little* wider when you speak, and always say 'your Majesty'.

ALICE: I only wanted to see what the garden was like, your Majesty.
(She curtseys.)

RED QUEEN: That's right. *(She gives ALICE a little pat.)* Though, when you say 'garden'—I've seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness.

(A doi-oing sound from the musicians.)

FLOWERS: Oh! What rudeness etc.

ALICE: I thought I'd try to find my way to the top of that hill.

(She gestures up the ramp.)

RED QUEEN: When you say 'hill' I could show you hills in comparison with which you'd call that a valley!

(Doi-oing.)

ALICE: No I shouldn't. A hill can't be a valley you know. That would be nonsense.

RED QUEEN: I've heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary. *(Doi-oing.)* Come here!

(She rushes ALICE up the ramp and turns her round to survey the scene.)

ALICE: Oh! The whole country is marked out in squares, just like a giant chess-board! It's a great huge game of chess that's being played all over the world! Oh what fun! I wish I could join in!

RED QUEEN: You *wish* you could! You can't help it! You are now a pawn on the Second Square. *(She places her there.)* You must travel through this world to the Eighth Square. When you get to the Eighth Square you'll be a Queen.

(Fast music begins.)

RED QUEEN: Run! Faster! Faster!

(They run down the ramp and then run furiously on the spot.)

ALICE: *(Stops.)* Could we stop now!

RED QUEEN: *(Stops.)* Faster! Faster! Don't try to talk!

(They run again.)

ALICE: *(They stop.)* Are we nearly there?

RED QUEEN: Nearly there? Why we passed it ten minutes ago! Now! Now! Faster!

(They run again and collapse together on the ground back-to-back. Music ends.)

RED QUEEN: You may rest a little now.

ALICE: But we haven't moved. We've been here all the time! Everything's just as it was!

RED QUEEN: Of course it is! What would you have it?

ALICE: Well, in our country you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing.

RED QUEEN: A slow sort of country. Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else you must run at least twice as fast as that!

(She gets up ready to run again.)

ALICE: I'd rather not try, please! I am so hot and thirsty!

RED QUEEN: I know what you'd like! A nice dry biscuit!

(She produces one from her pocket.)

ALICE: Oh, thank you!

RED QUEEN: Have another one?

ALICE: No thank you. One's *quite* enough!

RED QUEEN: Thirst quenched, I hope?

ALICE: Well, the biscuit was very dry!

RED QUEEN: Oh good! Now where were we?

(She takes ALICE back up the ramp to the second square.)

RED QUEEN: A pawn goes two squares in its first move, you know.

(The first and second note of a scale sound, preferably on a base electric guitar.)

So you'll go *very* quickly through the Third Square—

(They step carefully into the Third Square. The third note of the scale sounds.)

by railway, I should think—and you'll find yourself in the Fourth Square in no time.

(They step into the Fourth Square, the fourth note sounds.)

Well, *that* square belongs to Tweedledum and Tweedledee—the Fifth is mostly water.

(They step into the Fifth Square, etc.)

The Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty.

(They step into the Sixth Square, etc.)

But you make no remark?

ALICE: I—I didn't know I had to make one—just then.

RED QUEEN: You *should* have said, 'It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this'—however, we'll suppose it said—the Seventh Square is all forest—

(They step into the Seventh Square etc.)

however, one of the Knights will show you the way—and in the Eighth Square we shall be Queens together, and it's all feasting and fun!

(They hold hands and jump into the last square. A handsome chord completes the sequence.)

Speak in French when you can't think of the English for a thing—turn out your toes as you walk—and remember who you are! Remember who you are. Remember who you are.

(She stomps out.)

(The musicians keep saying "Remember, remember". The light narrows to a spot on ALICE, the flowers disappear.)

The "Remembers" change to a snoring noise, which finally turns into the noise of a train.)

THE THIRD SQUARE: THE RAILWAY JOURNEY

ALICE: Remember who you are? How can I forget? Oh, but I'm changing all the time, so I'm not the same person I was yesterday. I'm growing and learning and changing every day. I must remember who I am and find out who I become! What's that noise? It sounds like snoring! No it's not! I remember—the Queen said I would go very quickly through the Third Square by railway—and here's the train.

(The railway music establishes etc. The train comes in rocking to the music. The whistle sounds, and the guard waves his red flag. The train stops, and the passengers point excitedly at ALICE. She gets into the train.)

GUARD: Tickets please!

(All the passengers hold out enormous tickets.)

Now then. Show your ticket child!

GENTLEMAN DRESSED IN WHITE PAPERS: Don't keep him waiting child! Why his time is worth a thousand pounds a minute!

ALICE: I'm afraid I haven't got one! There wasn't a ticket office where I came from.

GOAT: (*bleating*) There wasn't room for one where she came from. The land there is worth a thousand pounds an inch!

GUARD: Don't make excuses. You should have bought one from the engine-driver.

GENTLEMAN: The man that drives the engine.
(They all crane out to look at the engine.)

ALICE: But he's not there!
(The GUARD wanders round to have a look.)

GENTLEMAN: Why the smoke alone is worth a thousand pounds a puff!

ALICE: They're not listening to a word I say!

GOAT: (*bleats*) Better say nothing at all. Language is worth a thousand pounds a word!

ALICE: I shall dream about a thousand pounds tonight, I know I shall.
(The GUARD kneels down looking at her through the wrong end of a telescope.)

GUARD: You're travelling the wrong way!

GENTLEMAN: So young a child ought to know which way she's going, even if she doesn't know her own name!
(They are amused.)

GOAT: She ought to know her way to the ticket office, even if she doesn't know her alphabet.
(They are even more amused.)

HORSE: We ought to stamp on her and post her back!
(They start to laugh.)

GOAT: She must pull the train herself the rest of the way!
(They rock about, slapping each other on the back.)

GENTLEMAN: Never mind what they all say, my dear, but take a return ticket every time the train stops!