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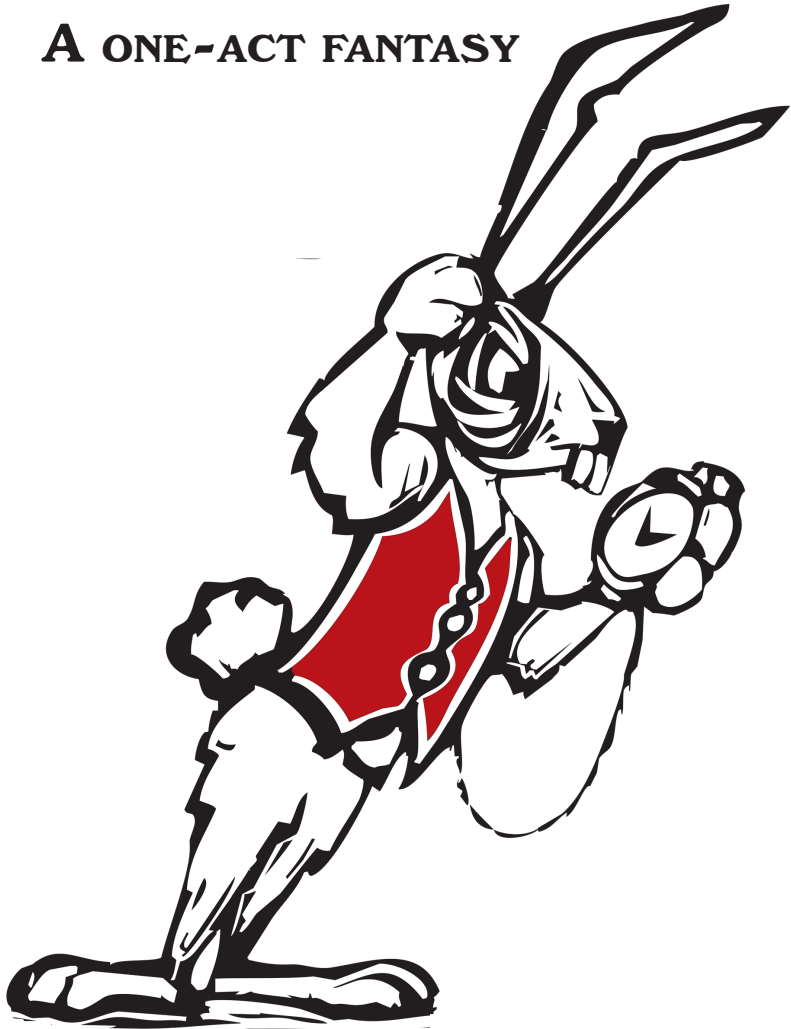
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Family Plays

ALICE

A ONE-ACT FANTASY



ADAPTED BY JEROME McDONOUGH
BASED ON THE NOVELS BY LEWIS CARROLL

ALICE

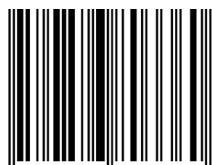
*Fantasy. Adapted by Jerome McDonough. Based on the novels by Lewis Carroll. Cast: 10+ actors, flexible casting. This one-act dramatization of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* is distinguished by the inventive manner with which Jerome McDonough handles Alice's various changes in size and the numerous changes of setting, with no breaks in the action. Due to his ingenious directions for making all the magical special effects easy to stage, this version is fun to do and fun to watch. Most of the revered characters are here: the rabbit, the Mad Hatter, the Queen of Hearts, the Cheshire Cat, and, perhaps best of all, the Oyster show. McDonough attempts to involve the audience in the experience of the adventures. With no front curtain, the main stage is skeletal and a bit dark with Lewis Carroll's study Down Left. Recommended for contest, children's theatre and workshops. *The dark stage is laid with a pattern of large white squares, giving the effect of a chess board that is not quite correct. A banner proclaims the stage area "Wonderland."* Everything is done in black and white except the very colorful characters who stand out against the mysterious picture. Chorus members, who will function as a Chinese stage crew in black dress, may also serve as ushers, perhaps speaking only in mime. Approximate running time: 35 minutes. Code: AG9.*

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ALICE

ALiCE

A One-Act Play

**Based on Lewis Carroll's
*Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass***

Adapted for the stage

by

JEROME McDONOUGH

Incidental Music

by

John Gibson

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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Jerome McDonough

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

An Environmental Wonderland

This adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s ageless stories attempts to involve the audience in the experience of the adventures.

The entrances to the auditorium may be decorated to resemble rabbit holes. Guests move up a few steps then back down more steps into the space. A banner above the performance area proclaims “Wonderland.”

There is no front curtain. Lewis Carroll’s study is Down Left. The main set is skeletal and a bit dark in a kind of pink half-light. We can sense several levels on the stage and there are ramps and stairs. A large bridge unit dominates Stage Center, angled from Down Right to Up Left. (Non-proscenium spaces—arranged environmentally—are another possibility.)

The dark stage is laid with a pattern of large white squares. The effect is that of a chess board but the perspective is not quite correct.

Everything is done in blacks and whites—except for those characters who are *very* colorful, making them stand out against the rest of the mysterious picture.

The members of the chorus, who will function as a Chinese Stage Crew dressed in their black leotards and black dance pants or shapeless black “pajama-like” outfits, may also serve as ushers. (Perhaps they should not speak as they work, however, but communicate through mime.)

DEDICATION

To Lewis Carroll—a most cooperative collaborator

Original Cast

The very first cast presented the full musical version of the play *ALICE!*, and their names are included with that script.

The following performers were the original cast of this incarnation, the one-act *ALiCE*.

Tracy Sherman, Jeff Tamplen, Christy Shirley, Christina Cruz,
Steve Chrostowski, Tamara Hearon, Tiffani McAvoy, Valerie Hill,
Kevin Wilson, Kade Roberts, Gary Nabors, Chad Bittick,
John Chisum, and Joey DeVenney

ALICE

Cast of Characters

Lewis Carroll

Alice

White Rabbit

Chinese Stage Crew (an ensemble which handles the props and takes the following roles):

Jane (Alice's sister)	Dinah
Mouse	Cheshire Cat
Dodo	Walrus
Eaglet	Carpenter
Fury (Dog)	Mad Hatter
Pat (Rabbit Puppet)	March Hare
Bill (Rabbit Puppet)	Dormouse
Trees #1, #2, #3, and #4	Tiger Lily
Battling Squire	Rose
Jabberwock	Violet
Caterpillar	Gardeners (Five & Seven)
Pigeon	Queen Mother
Duchess	Queen of Hearts
Cook	Knave of Hearts
Baby	King of Hearts
Tweedle Dee	Guard
Tweedle Dum	Jurors

Δ

Place: A Wonderland

Time: The Victorian Era

Scene: The visible world and the hidden world

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Ornate story book—Carroll
 Book (can be mimed)—Jane
 Pocket watch—White Rabbit
 Several decorative bottles—Various Ensemble Members
 Jam Jar—Ensemble Member, Alice
 Little box with small cake—Alice
 Key—on table
 The little door—Ensemble Member
 Decorative fan and kid gloves—White Rabbit
 Three small toy stuffed rabbits or puppets—White Rabbit, Ensemble Members
 Pebbles—Rabbit puppets
 Sword—Battling Squire
 Monster-head mask—Ensemble Member as Jabberwock
 Alice's head mask on pole—Alice
 Large egg—Pigeon
 Huge smile—Cheshire Cat
 Tea things—Mad Hatter, March Hare, Dormouse
 Pocket watch—Mad Hatter
 Colored streamers—Ensemble Members (trees, flowers)
 Large sandwich boards decorated as playing cards—Guards
 Sword—Guard
 Royal Regal Imperial Croquet Ball—rolls on stage to the Queen
 2 scrolls—White Rabbit
 Notebooks—Jurors

Music

Each producing company may choose its own music to accompany ALICE. A pre-recorded tape of original music by composer John Gibson is available from I. E. Clark, Inc. The selections on this tape are synthesized instrumental versions of the music from the full-length musical, ALICE!, by Jerome McDonough and John Gibson.

Costumes and Costume Bits

The only realistically costumed and consistent characters are Alice, Lewis Carroll, and the White Rabbit. Carroll wears a Victorian suit or full tuxedo. Alice dresses in the traditional blouse, pinafore, hair ribbon, flats, etc., which have defined her character for over a century. The White Rabbit dresses as . . . well . . . as a White Rabbit—with a waistcoat and pocket watch.

Ensemble Members, who function as a Chinese Stage Crew, take all other parts, suggesting each costume with a few bright accessories, masks, or other theatrical devices. A possible, but by no means the only, costume plot is outlined below.

The members of the Ensemble dress in black leotards and black dance pants or shapeless black "pajama-like" outfits. When performing purely a "stage crew" function, Ensemble Members may wear black hoods in the classical Oriental style.

Suggested Accessories for Chinese Stage Crew Parts

Jane (Alice's sister).....	pinafore and hair ribbon
Dinah	cat's ears and tail
Mouse	mouse ears and tail
Dodo	beak and feathers
Eaglet.....	beak and feathers
Fury (Dog).....	floppy dog ears
Trees #1, #2, #3, & #4	streamers to suggest leaves
Battling Squire	sword, "breastplate," helmet
Jabberwock	oversized monster-head mask
Caterpillar	mittens on hands and feet
Pigeon	beak and feathers
Duchess	decorative vest and headgear
Cook	dirty chef hat and apron
Baby	diaper, oversized pacifier
Tweedle Dee	bright vest, beanie
Tweedle Dum	bright vest, beanie
Cheshire Cat	striped shirt or top, cat ears
Walrus	tuxedo top, floppy tusks
Carpenter	nail apron, hat
Oysters	black and/or white gloves
Mad Hatter	top hat
March Hare	ears and nose
Dormouse	nose and tail
All Flowers	bright streamers for petals
Queen Mother	skewed crown, sneakers
Queen of Hearts	red cape, crown, scepter
Knave of Hearts	red tunic, red beret
King of Hearts.....	red cape, crown
Guard	red vest, sword
Jurors.....	thick glasses, wigs

The Set

Unit set pieces may comprise the physical set of ALICE. The entire mass described here is angled from Down Right to Up Left, to create a bit of strange perspective. A 4' x 8' platform or parallel (A) dominates Center Stage. It forms a bridge, mounted atop and between a 4' step unit (B) at Right, and another 4' step unit (C) atop a 4' x 8' x 1' platform (D) at Left. A 4' x 4' ramp (E) and a 4' x 4' platform (F) lead to the above unit from Right. Another 4' x 4' ramp (G) leads down from the Stage Left 4' x 8' platform at a ninety degree angle, toward the apron. An assortment of short 4' to 6' pylons or pillars (H) topped by longer pylons, pillars, tubes, boards, or even securely fastened cloth (I) creates a strange sort of skeletal roof effect upstage of the main unit. Figure A, p. 29

Every element of this set must be strongly built, securely connected, and tested under performance conditions. All set pieces must be constantly monitored for wear and/or misalignment. A good deal of traffic crosses the Center Stage bridge and no company ever wants anybody to get hurt.

ALICE

[Before the audience is quite aware of it, the MUSIC begins. Upon this cue, the CHINESE CREW moves silently onto the set and stands, sits, reclines, and takes every other possible position, one person per white square on the huge odd chess board which is the stage. Each square will be picked up and utilized in a multiplicity of ways during the performance. Several levels, including a slanted bridge, Center, and steps and ramps leading to and fro give a slightly skewed look to the chess board. Everything is elegant, but a bit off, in imitation of the play.]

Down Left and Down Right or on side stages are a "drawing room" (Right) and a "study" (Left). Brighter, warmer LIGHTS come up in these areas as action begins in each. LEWIS CARROLL, carrying an ornate book, comes down the aisle of the auditorium, moving toward his study. FOLLOW SPOT takes him to the stage and remains on until Alice's scene begins. CARROLL takes his seat in his study and opens the book. ALICE and her sister JANE are in the Down Right area. Her cat (DINAH) huddles near. The SISTER is miming reading to her. ALICE's actions follow the narration. MUSIC under]

CARROLL. *[Reading]* Alice was very tired of sitting. She peeked into the book her sister was reading, but . . .

ALICE. *[Looking, speaking to herself]* It has no pictures or conversation in it. *[She turns to Dinah and begins to talk to her, as if in thought]* Now, Dinah, I'll tell you my ideas about Looking Glass House. There's the room you can see through the glass that's just the same as our drawing room. If you leave the door wide open, Looking Glass House looks very like our hallway as far as you can see. It may be quite different on beyond. *[DINAH looks at her, not quite understanding. Settles down to nuzzle her instead]* Let's pretend the glass has got all soft like gauze. *[DINAH looks up at her as she closes her eyes and leans back to consider the possibility]* Why it's turning into a mist. It'll be easy to get thr . . .

CARROLL. Suddenly a White Rabbit ran by her. *[WHITE RABBIT runs around the Proscenium and past the two girls and heads toward Center]*

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, dear! I shall be too late!

CARROLL. The Rabbit took a watch out of its waistcoat pocket, looked at it, then hurried on. Alice started, for she had never seen a rabbit with a waistcoat pocket or a watch. It popped down a large rabbit hole.

[WHITE RABBIT jumps under the Center unit. ALICE follows up a ramp, then mimes moving into the hole, but rather than her going in, the CHINESE STAGE CREW breaks and moves to Down Center and raises white chessboard squares on three sides of her to suggest the hole. ALICE starts to move, on cue, as CREW MEMBERS wave other squares, ruffling her clothes and suggesting the falling into the earth]

CARROLL. Alice followed, never once considering how she was to get out. She found herself falling very slowly, for she had plenty of time to look about. *[Other CREW MEMBERS push items—dolls, toys, books, etc. into the hole space from left and right, between the squares, starting at floor level, then raising them to the top of the squares. When the top is reached, other CREW MEMBERS move other items up. There is a continuous array of items, some full size, some miniature. More items pass, including a jam jar]*

ALICE. *[Taking the jar, reading label]* Orange Marmalade. *[Looking inside]* Empty.

CARROLL. She put it onto a shelf as she fell past. *[STAGE CREW hand takes it as it passes]*

ALICE. I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth. I wish you were here, Dinah. There are no mice in the air, but you might catch a bat and that's very like a mouse.

CARROLL. When suddenly . . .

CREW. *[As ALICE lands at stage level]* THUMP!

CARROLL. The White Rabbit was hurrying down a long passage.

[Some CHINESE CREW MEMBERS form two lines from the apron to the top of the levels, holding white squares, suggesting doors in a long hallway. Far upstage a CREW MEMBER holds a small square in front of his head]

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, my ears and whiskers! *[Rushing through the hallway]* I'm late! *[He disappears behind a set piece]*

CARROLL. Alice found herself in a long hall *[ALICE's action*

follows dialog] with locked doors all 'round. She tried each door, wondering . . . [ALICE tries as many doors as pacing permits]

ALICE. How am I to get out?

[A CREW MEMBER has picked up a small square. He crouches on the apron, holding the piece on top of his head. He appears to be a small table]

CARROLL. She came upon a tiny gold key on a little table.

ALICE. This might fit! [She tries the doors]

CARROLL. But the locks were too large or the key was too small, until she came upon a little door she had not noticed before.

ALICE. I'll try it!

CARROLL. It fit! [CREW MEMBER swings open the square, revealing his face, wearing a HUGE grin] The door led into a lovely garden. But she could not even get her head through the doorway.

ALICE. I wish I could shut up like a telescope.

CARROLL. She went back to the table, hoping to find a book on shutting up like telescopes, but instead she found a bottle. [CREW MEMBER places a bottle on his "table" square]

ALICE. [Reading] "Drink me." [Looking at it carefully] I'll see if it's marked "poison" for I've read that if you drink much poison it is certain to disagree with you.

CARROLL. It was not marked "poison." Alice tasted it.

ALICE. [Savoring it] Very nice! A mixed flavor of roast goose and strawberry tart! [Pause] How curious! I'm shutting up like a telescope. [The CREW raise the doorways and table top up as high as they can reach]

CARROLL. She was now only ten inches high.

ALICE. The right size for going through the little door.

CARROLL. But when she went to the table for the key, she could not reach it. Alice sat down and cried.

ALICE. [Speaking firmly to herself] There's no use crying! Leave off this instant.

CARROLL. She was fond of pretending to be two people. Her eye fell on a box. [She picks it up from the floor and opens it] In it was a small cake.

ALICE. "Eat me." Well, if it makes me larger, I can reach the key; and smaller, I can creep under the door. [Action follows dialog]

CARROLL. She ate a bit, then held her hand on the top of her

head to feel which way it was growing. *[A STAGE CREW MEMBER raises her up slowly and places her on a KNEELING CREW MEMBER's shoulders]*

ALICE. Curiouser and curiouser! I'm opening like the largest telescope ever! Good-bye, feet.

CARROLL. Her head struck the roof of the building. *[A CHINESE CREW MEMBER strikes her head with a white square]* Poor Alice. *[The Little Door is brought to her at knee level. She mimes reaching toward it. Unlocks it. Has to bend to see]*

ALICE. To get through is more hopeless than ever!

CARROLL. And she began crying again.

ALICE. *[Still crying and sobbing]* Stop crying in this way! *[Heavier sobbing than ever]*

CARROLL. But she went on until there was a large pool.

WHITE RABBIT. *[Approaching Alice's position, not seeing her]* Oh, the Duchess! She'll be savage if I'm late!

ALICE. If you please, sir . . . *[WHITE RABBIT, seeing her enormity, jumps at the sound, hurls his gloves and fan at her and runs off]* Dear, dear! *[Holding gloves and fan, starts to fan herself]* How odd everything is today. I wonder if I've been changed in the night. But who am I? I can't be Mabel, for she knows so very little. If I AM Mabel, I'll stay down here 'til I'm somebody else.

CARROLL. She looked at her hands. She had put on one of the Rabbit's gloves.

ALICE. I must be growing smaller! *[CREW has been gradually lowering her. She is short again]* Goodness!

CARROLL. She was two feet high and shrinking. *[Little door and table start to rise again]* Worse, her foot slipped and . . .

CREW. Splash!

[STAGE CREW begins to move several white squares, arranged as diagonals, simulating water, downstage of her. The squares "roll" to suggest the movement of water during this scene]

ALICE. Have I fallen into the sea?

CARROLL. But it was a pond of her own tears.

ALICE. I shall be punished for crying now.

CARROLL. She heard something splashing.

ALICE. It must be a hippopotamus!

CARROLL. But she remembered her size and made out that it was only a Mouse.

[MOUSE surfaces from within the squares and starts "swimming" past her. (This, as most costumes taken by Chinese Crew Members, is a slight suggestion of costuming and character—a fanciful mouse ears and tail, for example)]

ALICE. *[Swimming in place]* O, Mouse!

CARROLL. The Mouse looked at her inquisitively.

ALICE. Perhaps he's French. *Ou est mon chat?* *[The MOUSE jumps and shudders in the water and starts away]* Oh, I forgot you don't like cats.

MOUSE. *[Stops swimming, bristling back at her]* Would you like cats if you were me?

ALICE. I wish I could show you Dinah. She's capital for catching mice. *[Stops]* Oh.

MOUSE. Cats! Vulgar things!

ALICE. Are you fond of dogs?

MOUSE. *[Noncommittally]* Mmm.

ALICE. There is such a nice dog near our house. It kills all the rats and —oh, dear. *[MOUSE starts swimming away]* Mouse, come back. We won't talk about cats or dogs.

[The "pond" has started to gather an odd collection of animals about this time—a DODO, an EAGLET, and other birds and creatures. MOUSE swims back to her, speaking:]

MOUSE. Let us swim to shore and I'll tell you why I hate cats and dogs.

CARROLL. It was high time, for the pool was getting crowded with birds and other curious creatures. *[The squares are dropped as the CREATURES and ALICE climb onto the platforms and gather, Center]*

ALICE. How shall we get dry?

DODO. A Caucus Race.

EAGLET. What is a Caucus Race?

DODO. You start running when you like and leave off when you like. Begin! If you wish. *[Some run, some do not. ALICE is among the runners]* Now stop! The race may be over.

ALICE. But who has won?

DODO. *[After a pause of reflection]* Everybody who wants to.

ALICE. A foolish race.

DODO. If you like.

ALICE. [*Turning to the Mouse*] O, Mouse, you promised to tell me why you hate—C's and D's.

MOUSE. Mine is a long and sad tale.

ALICE. [*Observing his tail*] It is a long tail, but why do you call it sad?

MOUSE. [*Ignoring her*] Fury said to a Mouse that he met in the house . . .

FURY. [*A kind of dog*] "Let us both go to law: I will prosecute you; let us both go to law, any law, quite, will do. Come, I'll take no denial, we must now have a trial."

MOUSE. "Such a trial, without crime, with no jury or judge, would be wasting our time."

FURY. "I'll be jury and judge . . ."

MOUSE. . . . said the Dog 'neath his breath . . .

FURY. ". . . I will try the whole cause and condemn you to . . ."

MOUSE. [*To ALICE, who has been drifting off to sleep*] You are not attending!

ALICE. I beg your pardon!

MOUSE. I shall do nothing of the sort. [*Starts to exit*]

FURY. "And condemn you to . . ."

MOUSE. [*Turning, halting the speech*] Quiet! [*Continues his exit. DOG moves off, tail between his legs—where else?*]

ALICE. Dinah would fetch him back. She's capital for catching mice and—I wish you could see her after the birds!

DODO. I . . . I must be getting home.

EAGLET. Yes, yes. It's time we were all in our nests. [*General confusion as all BIRDS escape from this frightening girl*]

ALICE. Nobody likes Dinah down here.

CARROLL. She heard footsteps. It was . . .

ALICE. The White Rabbit.

WHITE RABBIT. [*Running and mumbling, as always*] Oh, the Duchess! She'll execute me, as sure as ferrets are ferrets! [*Searching about on the floor*] Where can I have dropped them? [*WHITE RABBIT looks up and sees her. Speaking angrily to her*] Mary Ann! Run home and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan!

CARROLL. Alice ran at once. Only on the way did she start thinking clearly.

ALICE. He took me for his housemaid. But I'll fetch him his fan and gloves—if I can find them.

[The CHINESE CREW has now picked up several white squares and has created the rough outline of a house Down Left]

CARROLL. She came upon a house, the door of which read . . .

CREW PERSON. "W. RABBIT."

CARROLL. *[ALICE enters the house]* She found a fan and a pair of kid gloves. She was just going to leave when her eyes fell on a bottle . . . *[Decorative bottle handed to her by a CREW MEMBER]*

ALICE. "Drink me." *[Sips from bottle]* I hope it makes me large again. *[The house shape starts to lower around her]*

CARROLL. Her head slammed against the ceiling.

ALICE. I shouldn't have drunk so much! *[CREW moves the house down even closer on her, layering the squares to make the shape smaller and smaller]*

CARROLL. She went on growing until she had to put one foot out a window and one arm up the chimney. *[Action follows narration]*

WHITE RABBIT. *[Entering from Left on hands and knees and using a very small stuffed toy image of himself as a puppet. SPOT-LIGHT hits the puppet and will stay with the puppets during this scene. (This device suggests the increased size of Alice. The scene will be played by the WHITE RABBIT and two CHINESE CREW MEMBERS also operating toy rabbits.)]* Mary Ann! *[Action follows narration]*

CARROLL. The Rabbit tried the door. *[Struggles with square to no avail]*

WHITE RABBIT. I'll get in at the window.

ALICE. That you won't. *[RABBIT PUPPET sees the foot which is out the window. He is puzzled]*

WHITE RABBIT. *[Calling]* Pat, come help me! *[PAT, another little rabbit puppet, appears on the opposite side of the house]* What's that in the window?

PAT. It's a foot, your honor.

WHITE RABBIT. You goose! Who ever saw one that size?

PAT. It's a foot, still.

WHITE RABBIT. Well, take it away. *[Long pause. PAT looks at White Rabbit, then at the foot, then at the audience, then back to White Rabbit]*