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*Dramatic Publishing*

LEWIS CARROLL'S

# *Alice in Wonderland*

A Play in Two Acts

by

ANNE COULTER MARTENS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(ALICE IN WONDERLAND)

ISBN 0-87129-241-6

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# ALICE IN WONDERLAND

*A Play in Two Acts*

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## CHARACTERS

ALICE	MAD HATTER
CHESHIRE CAT	MARCH HARE
WHITE RABBIT	DORMOUSE
CATERPILLAR	TWEEDLEDUM
FROG FOOTMAN	TWEEDLEDEE
DUCHESS	HUMPTY DUMPTY
COOK	MOCK TURTLE
QUEEN OF HEARTS	GRYPHON
KING	SOLDIERS (three)
KNAVE	EXECUTIONER
COURTIER	GARDENERS (three)
LADIES (any number)	FLOWER-GIRLS (six)
HEART CHILDREN (any number)	PROP MEN

PLACE: *Wonderland*

TIME: *Afternoon, a little while ago.*

## SYNOPSIS

Act One, Scene One: *Alice arrives, and meets some strange characters.*

Scene Two: *She goes to the Mad Tea Party.*

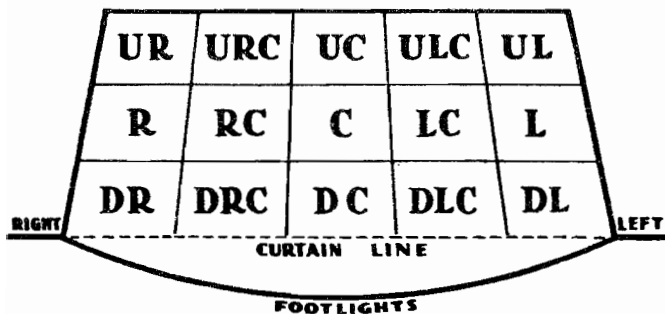
Act Two, Scene One: *Alice plays croquet with the Queen.*

Scene Two: *There is a trial.*

\*All parts except Alice, Duchess, Queen, King, Knave, and Executioner may be played by either male or female actors.

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



## STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

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**NOTE:** Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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This scene is played in front of the curtains after a Blackout. It shows the end of the Rabbit Hole. A large door which does not open is set directly in front of the closed curtains, C. It is painted white with a big red heart on it. At far DR a portion of a wall about four feet high, painted stone or brick, can be seen. Fastened to the left side of it is a lower stone-effect step. Unseen at this time is a similar step at the right side. A few stylized pieces of shrubbery may be used near the wall. A small table is at L with a key on it. Entrances are L, R, and C, through the curtains.

**LIGHTS ON:** The CHESHIRE CAT is curled up as if sleeping in front of the door. He gets up, stretches, and speaks to the audience.

### CAT

I'm the Cheshire Cat. I knew you'd recognize me because I'm always grinning. You've heard the expression, "Grin and bear it"? Me, I grin and share it. Share what? The fun, of course. All the fun and excitement of Wonderland. We're going to have a visitor in a moment, a little girl named Alice who chased across the field after a White Rabbit till he

dived down his rabbit hole.

(Looks R)

Here comes the rabbit now!

(The WHITE RABBIT appears on the higher portion of the wall, which has a standing area such as a low table behind it. He carries a fan and white gloves)

RABBIT

Oh, dear, oh, dear, I wonder what time it is?

(Steps down onto the low step)

CAT

Overtime.

RABBIT

Then I'm late, and the Queen will be angry!

CAT

Isn't she always?

RABBIT

When that silly girl ran after me, I tumbled down here too fast.

(Brushes himself off. A bumpety-bump sound is heard offstage)

Now *she's* falling down!

(Goes to door C)

I hope the Queen doesn't find out.

CAT

Why?

RABBIT

She might blame *me*.

CAT

(To audience)

This must be Alice.

(Moves L)

(ALICE, in a pretty dress with a white pinafore, may appear to slide from behind the wall onto the lower step. If this can't be worked, she can just walk on brushing off her dress)

ALICE

Mr. Rabbit, wait for me!

(Bumps down to floor)

RABBIT

Oh, dear, oh, dear! The Queen doesn't *like* little girls!

(Goes quickly around the door and out through the curtains)

ALICE

He didn't wait!

(Gets up, brushing herself off)

CAT

Why should he? You haven't been properly introduced.

ALICE

I'm Alice.

CAT

And I'm the Cheshire Cat. You may call me Chessy.

ALICE

I like cats and Chessy is a nice name. Where am I?



I fell so far that I'm all mixed up.

CAT

(To audience)

Who isn't, these days?

(To ALICE)

Don't you really know?

ALICE

All I know is that I have to get back up to my sister. We were sitting on the grass playing a little card game when the White Rabbit went by.

CAT

If you chase after strange rabbits, you mustn't be surprised if strange things happen.

ALICE

I've never known a cat who could talk. My cat Dinah just purrs.

CAT

None of them can talk, where you come from.

ALICE

I wonder why.

CAT

There are lots of things here to wonder about. That's why this is called Wonderland.

ALICE

O-oh. Chessy, can you tell me how to get back to where I came from? My parents will be worried about me.

CAT

I don't have any family. Fortunately.

ALICE

Why do you say "fortunately"?

CAT

Because all the cream in the saucer is for me.

ALICE

I'm afraid you're rather selfish.

CAT

Isn't everybody?

ALICE

I don't *know* everybody.

CAT

I'll help you get acquainted.

ALICE

It's good of you to offer, but I really *must* go home.

CAT

Why?

ALICE

Today's my birthday, and my mother's baking a great big cake with pink icing, and all my friends are coming to my party at five o'clock.

CAT

Nobody ever gave a birthday party for me. Anyway, I don't care for pink icing.

ALICE

My cat Dinah likes it. I always give her some.

(Anxiously)

What time is it now?

CAT

About four, I think. Time doesn't matter much down here.

ALICE

It does to *me*. If I'm not back home by five o'clock, there won't *be* any party, and my mother and daddy will be sick with worry.

CAT

Too bad.

ALICE

And Dinah won't get any pink icing.

(Suddenly)

Oh, my goodness! Poor Dinah!

CAT

What now?

ALICE

She was taking a nap in my doll house this morning, and I closed the door. Nobody will know where she is, and she can't get out!

CAT

As I said before, too bad.

ALICE

(Indignantly)

Don't you *care*?

CAT

I have problems of my own.

ALICE

Oh, dear! What am I going to do?

(Stamps her foot.)

CAT

Don't stamp your foot at me. I might get nervous and go away.

(Turns his back on her)

ALICE

(Going to him)

No, no, don't leave me! I need your help.

CAT

Too bad.

ALICE

Stop saying that!

(More politely)

Will you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?

CAT

That depends on where you want to get to.

ALICE

Whichever way will take me home again. I don't much care.

CAT

Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

ALICE

As long as I get *somewhere*.

CAT

You're sure to do that if you walk long enough.

ALICE

What sort of people live around here?

CAT

Assorted sorts.

ALICE

Assorted, like in a box of tea cakes?

CAT

None of them are at all like tea cakes.

ALICE

Please don't be offended. I must get home in time for my birthday party, and let poor Dinah out of the doll house.

CAT

I must try having a birthday some time, if the Queen of Hearts will permit it.

ALICE

Nobody has to *permit* a birthday. It just happens.

CAT

Maybe where *you* come from.

ALICE

I don't think you're very friendly. *My* cat purrs.

CAT

Maybe you don't *think* at all.

ALICE

Would the Queen of Hearts help me? *She* sounds very kind-hearted.

CAT

First you jump down the rabbit hole, and now you're jumping to conclusions. Why should the Queen of

Hearts be kind-hearted?

ALICE

Because of her name.

CAT

Not a very sensible reason.

ALICE

(Looking at door)

Will I find her if I go through this door?

CAT

Maybe.

ALICE

(Trying the painted doorknob)

But it's locked!

CAT

Of course.

ALICE

(Looking around)

A key!

(Picks up key from table)

Is this the key?

CAT

It's *a* key.

ALICE

(Trying it on the painted keyhole)

It won't fit!

CAT

I could have told you that.

ALICE

Then how do I get through it?

CAT

Try going *around* it.

ALICE

Thank you.

(Pauses at side of door, about to go  
around it)

You're not really unfriendly, after all.

CAT

After all what?

ALICE

You weren't very nice when I first came.

CAT

Because I don't make friends with just anybody.

ALICE

But I'm not just anybody. I'm Alice.

CAT

And I'm Chessy.

(Thoughtfully)

You know, I'm beginning to like you.

ALICE

Won't you come with me? I'd be glad to have someone to talk to.

CAT

That depends on what you want to talk about.

ALICE

How to get home again.

CAT

Then take that key along and don't lose it.

ALICE

(Studying key)

There's something special about this key?

CAT

Very special. It even has a name.

ALICE

Please help me to find the right door!

(Puts key in her pocket)

CAT

You'll have to find it yourself.

ALICE

(Disappointed)

And I thought you were my friend! I'll ask the Queen of Hearts.

CAT

You may be sorry if you do.

ALICE

I wish I knew why you grin all the time. Is something funny?

CAT

Everything's funny, if you can laugh at it.

ALICE

There's something strange about the way you keep watching me.

CAT

That's because I'm a watch cat.



ALICE

Did you say . . . watch cat?

CAT

Certainly. You've heard of watch *dog*, haven't you? Well, I happen to be a watch cat. Would you like me to watch over you?

ALICE

(Gratefully)

Oh, would you, please? I've never been away from home before.

CAT

I've never been a watch cat for a little girl before.

ALICE

Then we *are* friends?

(The CAT puts out a paw and ALICE shakes it)

CAT

You'll be seeing me around.

(As ALICE is about to go around the door, the Queen is heard shouting)

QUEEN

(Offstage)

Off with their heads!

ALICE

(Alarmed)

Who was that?

CAT

Don't ask. Just get going.