

SYNOPSIS

Alice's Adventures In Wonderland

Alice is quietly reading over her sister's shoulder when she sees a White Rabbit dash across the lawn and disappear into its hole. She jumps up to rush after him and finds herself falling down the rabbit hole. At the bottom, she sees the White Rabbit hurrying along a corridor ahead of her and murmuring that he will be late. He disappears around a corner, leaving Alice standing in front of several locked doors.

On a glass table, she finds a tiny golden key that unlocks a little door hidden behind a curtain. The door opens upon a lovely miniature garden, but Alice cannot get through the doorway because it is too small. She sadly replaces the key on the table. A little bottle mysteriously appears. Alice drinks the contents and immediately begins to grow smaller, so much so that she can no longer reach the key on the table. Next, she eats a piece of cake she finds nearby, and soon she begins to grow to such an enormous size that she can only squint through the door. In despair, she begins to weep tears as big as raindrops. As she sits crying, the White Rabbit appears, moaning that the Duchess will be angry if he keeps her waiting. He drops his fan and gloves, and when Alice picks them up, she begins to grow smaller. Again she rushes to the garden door, but she finds it shut and the golden key once more on the table out of reach.

Then she falls into a pool of her own tears. Splashing along, she encounters a mouse who stumbled into the pool. Alice tactlessly begins a conversation about her cat Dinah, and the mouse becomes speechless with terror. Soon the pool of tears is filled with living creatures—birds and animals of all kinds. An old Dodo suggests that they run a Caucus Race to get dry. Asking what a Caucus Race is, Alice is told that the best way to explain it is to do it, whereupon the animals run themselves quite breathless and finally become dry. Afterward, the mouse tells a "Tail" to match its own appendage. Alice is asked to tell something, but the only thing she can think of is her cat Dinah. Frightened, the other creatures go away, and Alice is left alone.

The White Rabbit appears once more, this time hunting for his gloves and fan. Catching sight of Alice, he sends her to his home to get him a fresh pair of gloves and another fan. In the Rabbit's house, she finds the fan and gloves and also takes a drink from a bottle. Instantly, she grows to be a giant size and is forced to put her leg up the chimney and her elbow out the window to keep from being squeezed to death.

She manages to eat a little cake and shrink herself again. As soon as she is small enough to get through the door, she runs into a nearby wood where she finds a caterpillar sitting on a mushroom. The caterpillar is very rude to Alice, and he

scornfully asks her to prove her worth by reciting “You Are Old, Father William.” Alice does so, but the words sound very strange. Disgusted, he leaves her, after giving her some valuable information about increasing or decreasing her size. She breaks off pieces of the mushroom and finds to her delight that she can become taller by eating from the piece in her left hand, shorter by eating from the piece in her right hand.

She comes to a little house among the trees. There a footman, who looks very much like a fish, presents to another footman, who closely resembles a frog, an invitation for the Duchess to play croquet with the Queen. The two amphibians bow to each other with great formality, tangling their wigs together. Alice opens the door and finds herself in the chaotic house of the Duchess. The cook is stirring a large pot of soup and pouring plenty of pepper into the mixture. Everyone is sneezing except the cook and a Cheshire cat, which sits on the hearth grinning. The Duchess holds a sneezing, squalling baby and sings a blaring lullaby to it. Alice, in sympathy with the poor child, picks it up and carries it out into the fresh air, whereupon the baby gradually turns into a pig, squirms out of her arms, and trots into the forest.

Standing in bewilderment, Alice sees the grinning Cheshire cat sitting in a tree. He is able to appear and disappear at will, and after exercising his talents, he advises Alice to go to a tea party given by the Mad Hatter. The cat vanishes, all but the grin. When that, too, finally disappears, Alice leaves for the party.

There, Alice has to deal with the strangest people she has ever seen—a March Hare, a Mad Hatter, and a sleepy Dormouse. All are too lazy to set the table afresh, and dirty dishes from preceding meals lie next to clean ones. The Dormouse falls asleep in its teacup, the Mad Hatter tells Alice her hair needs cutting, and the March Hare offers her wine and then tells her there is none. They ask her foolish riddles that have no answers, and then they ignore her completely and carry on a ridiculous conversation among themselves. She escapes after the Dormouse falls asleep in the middle of a story he is telling.

Next, she finds herself in a garden of rose trees. Some gardeners appear with paintbrushes and begin to splash red paint on a white rose. Alice learns that the Queen ordered a red rose to be planted in that spot, and the gardeners are busily and fearfully trying to cover their error before the Queen arrives. The poor gardeners, however, are not swift enough. The Queen catches them in the act, and the wretched gardeners are led off to be decapitated. Alice saves them by shoving them down into a large flower pot, out of sight of the Queen.

A croquet game begins. The mallets are live flamingos, and the balls are hedgehogs which think nothing of uncurling themselves and running rapidly over the field. The Duchess corners Alice and leads her away to the seaside to introduce her to the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon. While engaged in a Lobster Quadrille, they hear the news of a trial. A thief stole some tarts. Rushing to the courtroom where a trial by jury is already in session, Alice is called upon to act as

a witness before the King and Queen of Hearts, but the excited child upsets the jury box and spills out all of its occupants. After replacing all the animals in the box, Alice says she knows nothing of the matter. Her speech infuriates the Queen, who orders that Alice's head be cut off. The whole court rushes at her, and Alice defiantly calls them nothing but a pack of cards. She awakens from her dream as her sister brushes away some dead leaves blowing over Alice's face.

Bibliography

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Summary Lewis Carroll. (2017). Retrieved January 22, 2017, from Enotes: <https://www.enotes.com/topics/alices-adventures>