

**LEWIS
CARROLL**

THE NURSERY

ALICE

Льюис Кэрролл

The Nursery Alice

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Lewis Carroll

The Nursery Alice

A Nursery Darling.

*A Mother's breast:
Safe refuge from her childish fears,
From childish troubles, childish tears,
Mists that enshroud her dawning years!
See how in sleep she seems to sing
A voiceless psalm – an offering
Raised, to the glory of her King,
In Love: for Love is Rest.*

*A Darling's kiss:
Dearest of all the signs that fleet
From lips that lovingly repeat
Again, again, their message sweet!
Full to the brim with girlish glee,
A child, a very child is she,
Whose dream of Heaven is still to be
A: Home: for Home is Bliss.*

PREFACE

(ADDRESSED TO ANY MOTHER.)

I have reason to believe that “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” has been read by some hundreds of English Children, aged from Five to Fifteen: also by Children, aged from Fifteen to Twenty-five: yet again by Children, aged from Twenty-five to Thirty-five: and even by Children – for there *are* such – Children in whom no waning of health and strength, no weariness of the solemn mockery, and the gaudy glitter, and the hopeless misery, of Life has availed to parch the pure fountain of joy that wells up in all child-like hearts – Children of a “certain” age, whose tale of years must be left untold, and buried in respectful silence.

And my ambition *now* is (is it a vain one?) to be read by Children aged from Nought to Five. To be read? Nay, not so! Say rather to be thumbed, to be cooed over, to be dogs’-eared, to be rumped, to be kissed, by the illiterate, ungrammatical, dimpled Darlings, that fill your Nursery with merry uproar, and your inmost heart of hearts with a restful gladness!

Such, for instance, as a child I once knew, who – having been carefully instructed that *one* of any earthly thing was enough for any little girl; and that to ask for *two* buns, *two* oranges, *two* of anything, would certainly bring upon her the awful charge of being “greedy” – was found one morning sitting up in bed, solemnly regarding her *two* little naked feet, and murmuring to herself, softly and penitently, “deedy!”

Eastertide, 1889.

I. THE WHITE RABBIT

Once upon a time, there was a little girl called Alice: and she had a very curious dream.

Would you like to hear what it was that she dreamed about?

Well, this was the *first* thing that happened. A White Rabbit came running by, in a great hurry; and, just as it passed Alice, it stopped, and took its watch out of its pocket.

Wasn't *that* a funny thing? Did *you* ever see a Rabbit that had a watch, and a pocket to put it in? Of course, when a Rabbit has a watch, it *must* have a pocket to put it in: it would never do to carry it about in its mouth – and it wants its hands sometimes, to run about with.

Hasn't it got pretty pink eyes (I think *all* White Rabbits have pink eyes); and pink ears; and a nice brown coat; and you can just see its red pocket-handkerchief peeping out of its coat-pocket: and, what with its blue neck-tie and its yellow waistcoat, it really is *very* nicely dressed.

“Oh dear, oh dear!” said the Rabbit. “I shall be too late!” *What* would it be too late *for*, I wonder? Well, you see, it had to go and visit the Duchess (you'll see a picture of the Duchess, soon, sitting in her kitchen): and the Duchess was a very cross old lady: and the Rabbit *knew* she'd be very angry indeed if he kept her waiting. So the poor thing was as frightened as frightened could be (Don't you see how he's trembling? Just shake the book a little, from side to side, and you'll soon see him tremble), because he thought the Duchess would have his head cut off, for a punishment. That was what the Queen of Hearts used to do, when *she* was angry with people (you'll see a picture of *her*, soon): at least she used to *order* their heads to be cut off, and she always *thought* it was done, though they never *really* did it.

And so, when the White Rabbit ran away, Alice wanted to see what would happen to it: so she ran after it: and she ran, and she ran, till she tumbled right down the rabbit-hole.

And then she had a very long fall indeed. Down, and down, and down, till she began to wonder if she was going right *through* the World, so as to come out on the other side!

It was just like a very deep well: only there was no water in it. If anybody *really* had such a fall as that, it would kill them, most likely: but you know it doesn't hurt a bit to fall in a *dream*, because, all the time you *think* you're falling, you really *are* lying somewhere, safe and sound, and fast asleep!

However, this terrible fall came to an end at last, and down came Alice on a heap of sticks and dry leaves. But she wasn't a bit hurt, and up she jumped, and ran after the Rabbit again.

And so that was the beginning of Alice's curious dream. And, next time you see a White Rabbit, try and fancy *you're* going to have a curious dream, just like dear little Alice.

II. HOW ALICE GREW TALL

And so, after Alice had tumbled down the rabbit-hole, and had run a long long way underground, all of a sudden she found herself in a great hall, with doors all round it.

But all the doors were locked: so, you see, poor Alice couldn't get out of the hall: and that made her very sad.

However, after a little while, she came to a little table, all made of glass, with three legs (There are *two* of the legs in the picture, and just the *beginning* of the other leg, do you see?), and on the table was a little key: and she went round the hall, and tried if she could unlock any of the doors with it.

Poor Alice! The key wouldn't unlock *any* of the doors. But at last she came upon a tiny little door: and oh, how glad she was, when she found the key would fit it!

So she unlocked the tiny little door, and she stooped down and looked through it, and what do you think she saw? Oh, such a beautiful garden! And she did so *long* to go into it! But the door was *far* too small. She couldn't squeeze herself through, any more than *you* could squeeze yourself into a mouse-hole!

So poor little Alice locked up the door, and took the key back to the table again: and *this* time she found quite a new thing on it (now look at the picture again), and what do you think it was? It was a little bottle, with a label tied to it, with the words "DRINK ME" on the label.

So she tasted it: and it was *very* nice: so she set to work, and drank it up. And then *such* a curious thing happened to her! You'll never guess what it was: so I shall have to tell you. She got smaller, and smaller, till at last she was just the size of a little doll!

Then she said to herself "*Now* I'm the right size to get through the little door!" And away she ran. But, when she got there, the door was locked, and the key was on the top of the table, and she couldn't reach it! *Wasn't* it a pity she had locked up the door again?

Well, the next thing she found was a little cake: and it had the words "EAT ME" marked on it. So of course she set to work and ate it up. And *then* what do you think happened to her? No, you'll never guess! I shall have to tell you again.

She grew, and she grew, and she grew. Taller than she was before! Taller than *any* child! Taller than any grown-up person! Taller, and taller, and taller! Just look at the picture, and you'll *see* how tall she got!

Which would *you* have liked the best, do you think, to be a little tiny Alice, no larger than a kitten, or a great tall Alice, with your head always knocking against the ceiling?

III.

THE POOL OF TEARS

Perhaps you think Alice must have been very much pleased, when she had eaten the little cake, to find herself growing so tremendously tall? Because of course it would be easy enough, *now*, to reach the little key off the glass table, and to open the little tiny door.

Well, of course she could do *that*: but what good was it to get the door open, when she couldn't get *through*? She was worse off than ever, poor thing! She could just manage, by putting her head down, close to the ground, to *look* through with one eye! But that was *all* she could do. No wonder the poor tall child sat down and cried as if her heart would break.

So she cried, and she cried. And her tears ran down the middle of the hall, like a deep river. And very soon there was quite a large Pool of Tears, reaching half-way down the hall.

And there she might have staid, till this very day, if the White Rabbit hadn't happened to come through the hall, on his way to visit the Duchess. He was dressed up as grand as grand could be, and he had a pair of white kid gloves in one hand, and a little fan in the other hand: and he kept on muttering to himself "Oh, the Duchess, the Duchess! Oh, *won't* she be savage if I've kept her waiting!"

But he didn't see Alice, you know. So, when she began to say "If you please, Sir – " her voice seemed to come from the top of the hall, because her head was so high up. And the Rabbit was dreadfully frightened: and he dropped the gloves and the fan, and ran away as hard as he could go.

Then a *very* curious thing indeed happened. Alice took up the fan, and began to fan herself with it: and, lo and behold, she got quite small again, and, all in a minute, she was just about the size of a mouse!

Now look at the picture, and you'll soon guess what happened next. It looks just like the sea, doesn't it? But it *really* is the Pool of Tears – all made of *Alice's* tears, you know!

And Alice has tumbled into the Pool: and the Mouse has tumbled in: and there they are, swimming about together.

Doesn't Alice look pretty, as she swims across the picture? You can just see her blue stockings, far away under the water.

But why is the Mouse swimming away from Alice in such a hurry? Well, the reason is, that Alice began talking about cats and dogs: and a Mouse always *hates* talking about cats and dogs!

Suppose *you* were swimming about, in a Pool of your own Tears: and suppose somebody began talking to *you*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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