

TOP READERS

LEWIS CARROLL

Alice in Wonderland

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level
2


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publications

Introduction

One summer day in 1862, the mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and his friend Robinson Duckworth, went on a boat trip up the river Isis in Oxford with their little child friends, Lorina, Alice and Edith Liddell. Dodgson tried to entertain the girls with a story during the trip, and that was how everything started. His story was the adventures of a little girl named Alice, who fell in a rabbit hole while chasing a White Rabbit.

The girls, and especially Alice, loved the story; Alice liked it so much that she asked Dodgson to write it down for her. That Christmas, Dodgson gave Alice a very special gift: it was a book written in hand, called *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, and it also had drawings by Dodgson himself.

Another famous writer of the time, his friend George MacDonald, talked Dodgson into publishing the story, and so he did. In 1865, Alice's story was published under a new title, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The writer's name was also changed to Lewis Carroll, and the drawings this time came from John Tenniel. At first, reviews for the book were not very good, but gradually things started to change. By the end of the 19th century, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was one of the most popular children's books in England and a favourite of Queen Victoria.

Since then, the book has never been out of print; it has been translated into more than 174 languages, and has inspired a lot of other books, comics, theatre plays, films, and even games, songs and other works of art.

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CHAPTER 1

It was a hot summer day. Alice sat under a tree and watched her sister reading a book with no pictures in it. 'I'm bored,' said Alice.

Just then, she saw a White Rabbit. The Rabbit stopped and looked at its watch. 'Oh dear! I will be late,' the Rabbit said, and he started to run.

Alice ran after him. The Rabbit went into a big hole in the ground, and then she jumped in behind him.

Alice fell slowly. Around her she could see cupboards and books and pictures on the walls. She took a jar of marmalade out of a cupboard and put it back in again. She fell and fell and fell and fell, and was almost asleep, when suddenly she hit the ground. The White Rabbit was there at the end of the tunnel. 'Oh my ears and whiskers!' he called out. 'It's getting late!'

Alice quickly followed him and a little later was in a long dark room with many doors in the walls; the Rabbit, however, wasn't there.

There was a small glass table in the room with a gold key on it. Alice tried the key in all the doors, but it did not fit any of them. 'What will I do now?' she wondered.

Just then, she saw a small door behind a curtain. She tried the key once more, and the door opened to a beautiful garden.

Alice tried to go through the door, but she was too big. She locked it and put the key back on the table.

Then, she saw a small bottle on the table. It said 'DRINK ME'. Alice put the bottle to her mouth and drank, and immediately she started getting smaller and smaller. Soon, she was as tall as the little door. 'Now I can go through,' she said.

She started for the door but then she remembered – the key was still on the table. She tried and tried, but she couldn't reach it. 'I must get bigger again,' she thought.

Just then, she saw a box on the floor. There was a piece of cake inside it. On the box it said: 'EAT ME'. Alice ate it and started



growing; she became taller and taller, until her head reached the ceiling.

She took the key from the table and ran to the door. But now she couldn't go through, because she was very tall. She started crying, and soon a pool of tears was on the floor.

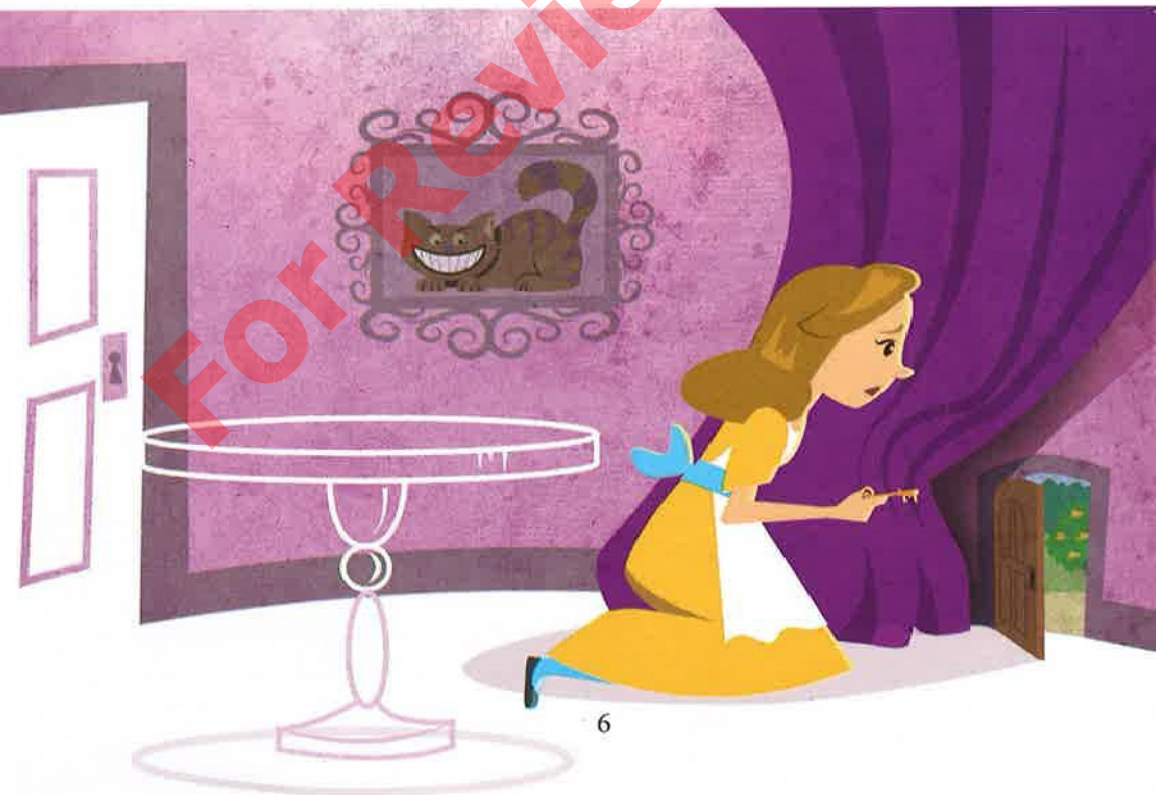
Suddenly, she heard the Rabbit's voice again: 'Oh, the Duchess will be angry! I am so late!'

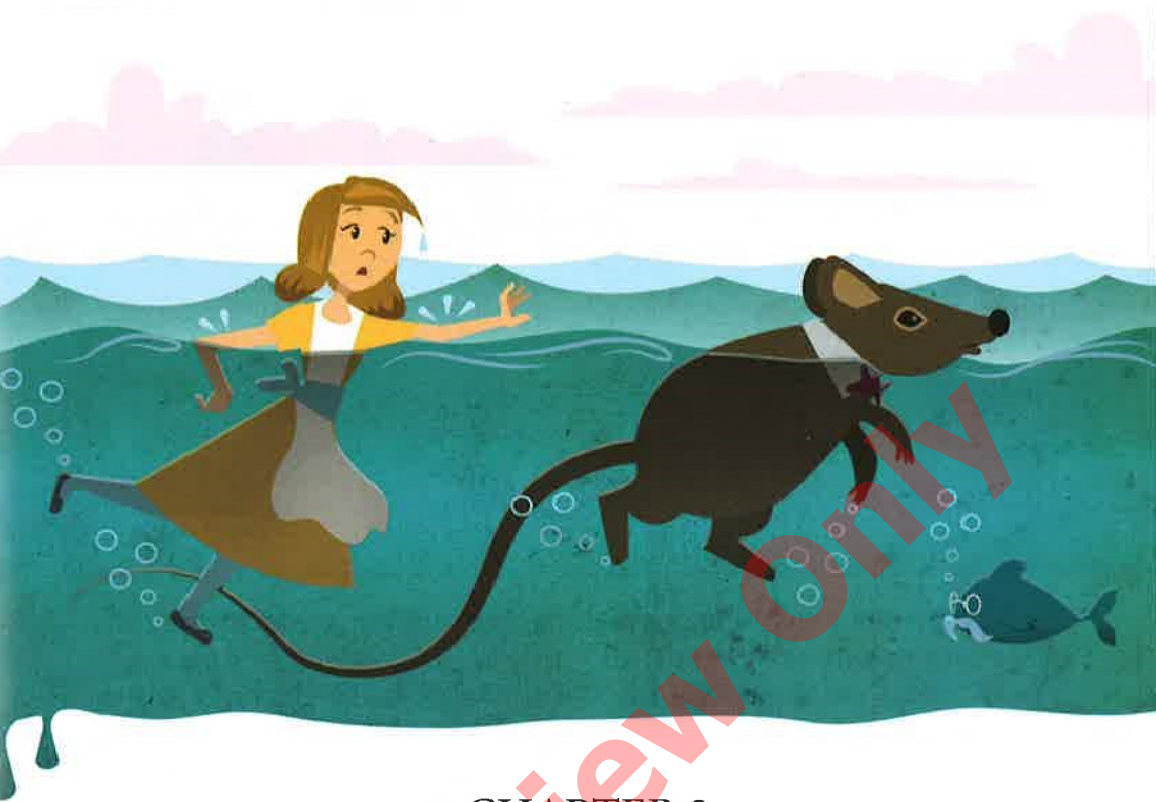
'Oh, please, sir, help me,' Alice called out.

At the sound of her voice, the Rabbit jumped. He dropped his white gloves and fan on the floor and then started running.

Alice picked up the gloves and the fan; it was very hot in there and she used the fan for some air. She was thinking: 'Oh, everything is so strange today! I am so tired of being alone down here!'

Suddenly, she looked down at her hands. She was wearing one of the gloves! Her hand was smaller now. She didn't know how, but she was smaller again.





CHAPTER 2

‘What is happening to me?’ thought Alice. She had to get out. She ran to the garden door again, but it was shut and the gold key was on the glass table.

‘This is very bad for me,’ Alice thought. ‘I have never been so small before.’ And as she spoke, she slipped and fell into a pond of salt water.

‘It’s the sea,’ she thought at first. But soon she saw that it was a pool of tears – her own tears. ‘Why did I cry so much?’ Alice said as she swam. ‘It will be so strange to drown in my own tears.’

Just then, she heard something splashing in the pool. At first, she thought it was a hippopotamus, but when she went near, she saw a mouse.

‘Oh, Mouse, I am so tired of swimming in this pool,’ she said finally. The mouse just looked at her, and didn’t say a word.

‘It probably doesn’t speak English,’ Alice thought. So she decided to speak French and she said something about a cat.



First the mouse got scared, and then it got angry. 'I don't like cats,' it said in a loud voice.

'Don't be angry, Mouse. Not all cats are bad,' Alice said, 'I must show you my cat, Dinah. She is wonderful. She sits by the fire and she is nice and soft and she catches mice – Oh, I'm sorry. I must not say things like that to you.'

The Mouse was shaking with fear.

'We will not talk about cats again, I promise,' Alice said. 'Let's talk about dogs. Do you like dogs?'

The Mouse did not answer.

'I know a farmer and he has a very clever dog. It's brown and has long curly hair, and kills rats – oops... I'm sorry!' Alice said.

But the Mouse turned and swam away.

'Mouse! Come back!' Alice called out.

The Mouse swam back to her. 'Let's go out on the shore,' it said.

Alice swam out to the shore. The pool was now full of strange animals, and many animals came out onto the shore with her. There was a dodo, an eaglet, a duck, and a parrot. They were all very wet. 'How can we get dry?' Alice asked.

'We will have a race,' the Dodo said, and drew a circle in the ground. Everyone started running inside the circle. Half an hour later, they were all dry.



Then the Mouse said: 'Come, sit down. I will tell you my story; it's a long and sad tale.'

'Yes, of course it is a long tail,' said Alice, looking at the Mouse's tail. 'But why is it sad?'

'Oh, you are just annoying!' said the Mouse and walked away.

'Come back!' said Alice, but the Mouse kept walking.

'I wish my cat Dinah were here,' Alice said. 'She would bring him back. She's great at catching mice – and birds, too!'

When the animals heard that, they got very scared and found an excuse to leave. Alice was alone again and felt very unhappy. Suddenly she heard footsteps. It was the White Rabbit looking for his gloves and fan.

'Mary Anne, go get me my gloves and fan! Quickly!' he said to her.

'He thinks I am his maid,' Alice thought as she ran towards the Rabbit's little house.