

AI-Generated Graded Readers

Masaru Uchida, Gifu University

Publication webpage:

https://www1.gifu-u.ac.jp/~masaru/a1/ai-generated_graded_readers.html

Publication date: April 30, 2026

About This Edition

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice.

The text was generated using ChatGPT and prepared for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

Content Note

This adaptation is based on a historical literary work. It may contain expressions, attitudes, or depictions that some readers may consider inappropriate or offensive by today's standards. Such elements have been retained or reflected where necessary in order to preserve the historical and literary character of the original work.

Source Text

Original work: Through the Looking-Glass

Author: Lewis Carroll

Source: Project Gutenberg

<https://www.gutenberg.org/>

Full text available at:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12/pg12.txt>

The original text is in the public domain.

Copyright and Use

This simplified edition is intended for educational and non-commercial use only.

The source text is provided by Project Gutenberg under its public domain policy.

Users should refer to the Project Gutenberg License for full terms:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/policy/license.html>

This adaptation was generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence and edited for readability and educational purposes.

Disclaimer

This edition is an educational adaptation and is not affiliated with or endorsed by Project Gutenberg.

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified by ChatGPT)

Part 1 — Through the Glass

One thing was clear: the white kitten had not made the trouble. The white kitten had been with Dinah, the old cat, for a long time. Dinah was washing its face, and the poor little thing had to lie still. So the white kitten could not have touched Alice's ball of wool.

The black kitten was the guilty one. Earlier that afternoon, Dinah had already washed its face, so it was free to play. Alice had been trying to roll up a ball of wool, but the black kitten had played with it. Now the wool lay all over the rug in knots and long loose lines, while the kitten ran round and round after its own tail.

"You bad little thing!" cried Alice. She picked up the kitten, but she kissed it too, so it would know she was not truly cruel. "Dinah should have taught you better manners," she said, looking at the old cat. Then Alice climbed back into the big chair with the kitten and the wool, and began to roll the ball again.

Kitty sat very properly on Alice's knee. It looked as if it was watching the wool with great care. From time to time it put out one soft paw and touched the ball, as if it wanted to help. But Alice knew very well that this kind of help usually made more trouble.

"Do you know what tomorrow is, Kitty?" Alice said. "You would know if you had sat at the window with me. I watched the boys carrying sticks for the big fire. But it became so cold, and the snow came down so hard, that they had to stop." She wound a little wool round the kitten's neck, just to see how it looked, but Kitty moved, and the ball fell to the floor again.

Alice picked it up and began once more. "I was very angry with you, Kitty," she said. "I almost opened the window and put you outside in the snow. You would have deserved it, you dear naughty thing. Now listen, because I am going to tell you all your faults."

She held up one finger very seriously. "First, you cried twice when Dinah

washed your face this morning. You cannot say you did not, because I heard you. What is that? Her paw went into your eye? Well, that was your fault for keeping your eyes open.” Alice pretended the kitten was answering her, though Kitty only looked at the wool.

“Second,” Alice went on, “you pulled Snowdrop away by the tail when I put down the milk. Were you thirsty? How do you know Snowdrop was not thirsty too? Third, you pulled out all the wool while I was not looking. That makes three faults, and you have not been punished for any of them yet.”

Then Alice began to think about punishment in general. “What if all my punishments were saved up for one day?” she said. “At the end of a year, I might have to go without fifty dinners at once. That would not be so terrible, I think. I would rather miss them than eat them all.”

The snow tapped softly against the window. Alice listened to it and grew quiet. “It sounds as if someone is kissing the glass from outside,” she said. “Perhaps the snow loves the trees and fields. It covers them with a white blanket and tells them, ‘Sleep now, dear things, until summer comes back.’”

Then Alice thought of the trees waking in summer. She imagined them dressed in green leaves and dancing when the wind blew. “That is a pretty idea,” she cried, and clapped her hands. The ball of wool fell again, but this time she hardly noticed. Her mind had already moved to another game.

“Kitty, can you play chess?” she asked. “Do not smile. I am asking seriously.” Alice had been playing chess earlier, and Kitty had watched as if it understood. When Alice had said “Check,” Kitty had purred. “It was a good check too,” Alice said, “and I might have won if that awful Knight had not come down among my pieces.”

Alice loved saying, “Let’s pretend.” She could pretend almost anything. She could pretend that she and her sister were kings and queens, even if there were only two of them. She could pretend that she was many people at once. Now she looked at Kitty and said, “Let’s pretend that you are the Red Queen.”

Alice took the Red Queen chess piece from the table and placed it before Kitty. “Sit up and fold your arms like this,” she said. But Kitty would not fold its arms

properly. So Alice held it up to the looking-glass. "If you are not good," she said, "I will put you through into Looking-Glass House. How would you like that?"

Then Alice began to explain her ideas about the house inside the mirror. "The room in there is almost the same as this room," she said. "But everything goes the other way. The books look like our books, but the words run backward. I know, because when I hold one of our books to the glass, the book in there looks right."

She wondered whether the looking-glass people had a real fire in winter. She wondered whether looking-glass milk was good to drink. She also wanted to know what lay beyond the little part of the passage that she could see in the mirror. "Oh, Kitty," she said, "how wonderful it would be if we could get through!"

Alice climbed onto the fireplace shelf without quite knowing how she had done it. "Let's pretend the glass is soft," she said. "Let's pretend it is like a silver cloud, and we can pass through it." As she spoke, the mirror really did begin to change. It grew soft and bright, like shining mist.

In another moment, Alice was through the glass. She jumped lightly down into the Looking-Glass room. The first thing she did was look at the fireplace. She was glad to see a real fire burning there, just as bright as the one in her own room.

"I shall be warm here," Alice thought. "And no one can tell me to move away from the fire." She looked around and noticed something strange. The part of the room she could see from the old room looked ordinary. But the parts she had never seen before were very different.

The pictures near the fireplace seemed alive. The clock had the face of a small old man, and it smiled at her. The room was not very tidy either. Several chess pieces were down among the ashes, and in the next moment Alice saw why. The chess pieces were walking about in pairs.

Alice got down on her hands and knees to look more closely. "There are the Red King and Red Queen," she whispered. "And there are the White King and White Queen." She spoke softly, because she did not want to frighten them. But soon she felt sure they could not hear or see her at all.

Suddenly something cried on the table behind her. Alice turned and saw a little White Pawn rolling about and kicking. "It is my child!" cried the White Queen.

She rushed past the White King so fast that she knocked him into the ashes. Then she tried to climb up to the table, where little Lily was crying.

Alice wanted to help. She gently picked up the Queen and set her on the table beside the little pawn. The Queen was so surprised by the sudden trip through the air that she could not speak at first. She sat down and held Lily in her arms. Then she called to the King, "Be careful of the volcano!"

The White King did not understand. He looked into the fire as if a volcano might be there. The Queen meant that she had been blown up into the air. Alice watched the King slowly trying to climb up to the table. "You will take hours," she said, though of course he could not hear her.

So Alice picked him up too. This time she moved him more slowly, because she did not want to take his breath away. Before she set him down, she dusted the ashes from him. The poor King looked so shocked that Alice almost laughed too hard to hold him. His eyes and mouth grew rounder and rounder.

When Alice put him beside the Queen, the King fell flat on his back. Alice was afraid she had hurt him. She looked around for water, but found only a bottle of ink. When she came back, he had recovered, and he and the Queen were talking in frightened whispers.

"I was cold down to the ends of my whiskers," said the King. "You have no whiskers," said the Queen. "I shall never forget this terrible moment," said the King. "You will forget it," said the Queen, "unless you write it down." So the King took out a very large notebook and began to write.

Alice saw that his pencil reached over his shoulder. A sudden idea came to her. She took the end of the pencil and began to write for him. The poor King looked very puzzled. "My dear," he said to the Queen, "I need a thinner pencil. This one writes things I do not mean at all."

There was a book on the table near Alice. She opened it, but the words looked wrong. They seemed to be written backward. Then Alice had a bright thought. "Of course," she said. "It is a looking-glass book. If I hold it up to the glass, I can read it."

This was the poem she read.

JABBERWOCKY

At brillig time, the slithy toves
Did turn and dig beside the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

It was the time when strange things moved,
And small strange birds went round and round.
All soft and dark the wood things stood,
And odd cries came from the ground.

“Take care, my son, of Jabberwock!
Its teeth can bite, its claws can catch.
Take care of Jubjub in the trees,
And keep away from Bandersnatch.”

He took his sharp bright sword in hand.
He searched a long time for his foe.
Then by a quiet forest tree,
He stopped and thought which way to go.

While he stood there in deep hard thought,
The Jabberwock, with eyes like fire,
Came moving through the dark thick wood,
And made a sound of hungry desire.

One, two! One, two! The bright sword flashed.
It cut and struck with quick sharp sound.
The monster fell. He took its head,

And turned for home across the ground.

“Have you killed the Jabberwock?
Come here, my brave and shining boy!
What a great and happy day!”
The father laughed aloud with joy.

It was the time when strange things moved,
And small strange birds went round and round.
All soft and dark the wood things stood,
And odd cries came from the ground.

“It is pretty,” Alice said when she had finished. “But it is hard to understand.” She did not want to say, even to herself, that she could not understand it at all. “It puts ideas into my head,” she thought, “but I do not quite know what the ideas are. Still, someone killed something, and that is clear.”

Then Alice suddenly remembered that she had not seen the garden yet. She did not want to go back through the glass before she had explored the house and the world beyond it. She hurried out of the room and went down the stairs in a new way. She put her fingers lightly on the rail and floated down without touching the steps.

She floated through the hall and almost floated straight out of the door. But she caught the doorpost just in time. After so much floating, she felt a little dizzy. So she was glad to find herself standing and walking in the ordinary way again.

Part 2 — The Talking Flowers and the Red Queen

Alice wanted to see the garden better, so she looked for a way up the little hill. There seemed to be a path leading straight to it. But after she had walked a short distance, the path turned sharply. Then it turned again, and soon Alice saw that it was not a straight path at all.

“This is a very strange path,” Alice said to herself. “It is more like a screw than a road.” She tried one turn, and then another. Each time she thought she was going toward the hill, but each time the path brought her back near the house.

Once she turned a corner too quickly and almost ran into the house itself. This annoyed her very much. “It is no use,” she said, looking up at the house as if it were arguing with her. “I am not going back inside yet. If I go in, I may have to go through the glass again, and then all my adventures will be over.”

She turned her back on the house and started again. This time she tried to walk very firmly and very straight. For a few minutes all went well, and she began to feel proud of herself. “I really shall reach the hill this time,” she said.

But just then the path gave a sudden twist. It seemed almost to shake itself under her feet. Before Alice knew what had happened, she was walking in at the front door of the house again. “Oh, this is too bad!” she cried. “I never saw such a house for getting in the way.”

Still, the hill was there in plain sight, and Alice did not mean to give up. She started once more and soon came to a large bed of flowers. There were daisies around the edge, and a willow tree stood in the middle. Near the tree, a tall Tiger-lily was moving softly in the wind.

“Tiger-lily,” said Alice, “I wish you could talk.” She did not really expect an answer, so she was greatly surprised when the flower replied. “We can talk,” said the Tiger-lily, “when there is someone worth talking to.” For a moment Alice could not speak at all.

At last she said, in a very quiet voice, “Can all the flowers talk?” The Tiger-lily moved its head in the wind. “As well as you can,” it said, “and much louder.” Then a Rose spoke too, and said that it had been waiting for Alice to begin.

The flowers were not very polite. The Rose said Alice’s face had some sense in it, though not very much. The Tiger-lily said Alice would look better if her petals curled up more. Alice did not like being judged like a flower, so she decided to ask a question instead.

“Are you not afraid,” she asked, “to be planted out here with no one to take care of you?” The Rose answered that the tree was there in the middle. Alice did

not understand how a tree could protect them. Then a Daisy cried out that the tree could bark, because its branches were called boughs.

All the daisies began shouting at once. Their small voices filled the air like many little bells, but not pleasant bells. The Tiger-lily shook with anger and told them to be quiet. Alice bent down and whispered to the daisies, "If you do not stop, I will pick you." At once the daisies became silent, and some of the pink ones turned white.

Alice tried to make the Tiger-lily feel better. "How can you all talk so well?" she asked. "I have been in many gardens, but the flowers there never spoke." The Tiger-lily told her to put her hand on the ground. Alice did so and found that the earth was very hard.

"In most gardens," said the Tiger-lily, "the beds are too soft. That makes the flowers sleep all the time." This seemed a good reason to Alice, and she was pleased to learn it. But the Rose said sharply that Alice probably never thought at all. A Violet, who had not spoken before, said Alice looked very foolish.

Alice did not want to quarrel with flowers, so she asked if there were other people in the garden. The Rose said there was another flower who could move about like Alice. This made Alice excited. She thought there might be another little girl somewhere nearby.

But the flowers described this other person in a strange way. They said she was redder than Alice and had shorter petals. They said her petals were arranged more neatly. The Rose added that Alice was beginning to fade, which Alice did not like at all.

Then the Larkspur cried, "She is coming!" Alice looked around quickly and saw the Red Queen. At first Alice was amazed by her size. In the room by the fireplace, the Red Queen had been only a small chess piece. Now she was taller than Alice herself.

"I think I will go and meet her," Alice said. The flowers told her that this was impossible and that she should walk the other way. Alice thought this was nonsense, so she went straight toward the Red Queen. But in a moment the Queen disappeared, and Alice found herself back at the front door of the house.

Alice was annoyed, but now she remembered what the Rose had said. She looked for the Red Queen again and saw her far away. This time Alice walked in the opposite direction. The plan worked beautifully. In less than a minute she stood face to face with the Red Queen, and the hill was in front of them too.

“Where do you come from?” said the Red Queen. “Where are you going? Look up, speak clearly, and do not move your fingers all the time.” Alice tried to obey all these rules at once. She explained that she had lost her way. The Queen said all the ways belonged to her, so Alice could not really lose her own way.

Then the Queen told Alice to bow while she was thinking, because it saved time. Alice thought this was strange, but she did not want to argue with a queen. She said that she only wanted to see the garden. The Queen answered that she had seen gardens much better than this one. Alice then said she wanted to reach the top of the hill, and the Queen said she had seen hills so high that this one would be called a valley.

“A hill cannot be a valley,” Alice said before she could stop herself. “That would be nonsense.” The Red Queen shook her head. She said she had heard nonsense so strange that Alice’s words would seem as sensible as a dictionary. Alice bowed again, because she was afraid the Queen might be offended.

They walked together to the top of the hill. Alice stood there and looked in every direction. The country below was very strange. Little streams ran across it, and green hedges divided the ground into squares. It looked exactly like a great chessboard.

“There should be chess pieces moving about,” Alice said. Then she saw some and her heart beat faster with excitement. “It is a huge game of chess,” she cried, “played all over the world, if this is the world. I wish I could be one of the pieces. I would not mind being a Pawn, though I would like best to be a Queen.”

The Red Queen smiled and said that this could easily be arranged. Alice could be the White Queen’s Pawn, because Lily was too young to play. Alice was now in the Second Square. When she reached the Eighth Square, she would become a Queen. Just as the Queen said this, they began to run.

Alice never understood exactly how the running began. She only knew that

she and the Red Queen were running hand in hand. The Queen ran so fast that Alice could hardly keep up. "Faster! Faster!" cried the Queen, though Alice had no breath left to answer.

The strangest thing was that the trees and other things around them did not change places. However fast they ran, they did not seem to pass anything. Alice wondered if everything moved along with them. The Queen seemed to know what she was thinking and cried, "Faster! Do not try to talk!"

At last Alice managed to ask if they were nearly there. "Nearly there?" said the Queen. "We passed it ten minutes ago." Then they ran even faster, until Alice felt as if they were flying over the ground. Suddenly they stopped, and Alice found herself sitting under the same tree, tired and dizzy.

"You may rest now," said the Queen kindly. Alice looked around in surprise. "But we have been under this tree the whole time," she said. "Everything is just as it was." The Queen answered that of course it was. In that country, one had to run as fast as possible just to stay in the same place.

Alice said that in her country, if people ran fast for a long time, they usually got somewhere else. "A slow country," said the Queen. "Here, if you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that." Alice said she did not want to try. She was quite happy to stay still, because she was hot and thirsty.

The Queen took a little box from her pocket and offered Alice a biscuit. It was not what Alice wanted, but she thought it would be rude to refuse. She ate it as well as she could. It was very dry, and she felt almost choked.

While Alice was eating, the Queen began to measure the ground with a ribbon. She put small pegs into the earth at different places. "At the end of two yards," she said, "I shall give you your directions. At three yards, I shall repeat them, so you do not forget. At four yards, I shall say good-bye. At five yards, I shall go."

The Queen walked slowly down the row of pegs. At the two-yard peg she turned and spoke. "A Pawn may move two squares on its first move," she said. "So you will pass through the Third Square very quickly, probably by train. Then you will come to the Fourth Square, where Tweedledum and Tweedledee live."

The Queen went on with her directions. The Fifth Square was mostly water,

and the Sixth belonged to Humpty Dumpty. Alice forgot to say anything polite, so the Queen told her what she should have said. Then she continued. The Seventh Square was all forest, and one of the Knights would show Alice the way. In the Eighth Square, Alice would become a Queen, and there would be feasting and fun.

At the next peg, the Queen turned again. She told Alice to speak French when she could not remember an English word. She also told her to turn out her toes when she walked and to remember who she was. Alice tried to bow, but the Queen had already moved on. At the fourth peg she said good-bye, and at the fifth peg she disappeared.

Alice did not know how the Queen had gone. Perhaps she had vanished into the air. Perhaps she had run quickly into the wood. Alice could not tell. But the Red Queen was gone, and Alice began to remember that she was now a Pawn. Soon it would be time for her to move.

Part 3 — The Train, the Gnat, and the Wood with No Names

The first thing Alice wanted to do was look carefully at the country she had to cross. She stood on her toes at the top of the hill and tried to see farther. “This is like learning geography,” she thought. “Main rivers: there are none. Main mountains: I am on the only one.” Then she saw some strange moving things far below among the flowers.

At first Alice thought they might be bees, because they were moving from flower to flower. But they were much too large to be ordinary bees. After watching for a little while, she understood the truth, and the idea almost took her breath away. They were elephants. They were using their long noses in the flowers, just as bees use their small mouths.

“Then the flowers must be enormous,” Alice thought. “They must be like little houses with no roofs.” She also thought there must be a great deal of honey in such flowers. For a moment she wanted to go down and look at them more closely. Then she changed her mind, because it might not be pleasant to walk among bees as large as elephants.

Alice decided she would go another way. "Perhaps I can visit the elephants later," she said to herself. "Besides, I want very much to get into the Third Square." So she ran down the hill. When she reached the first little stream, she jumped over it.

In the next moment, everything changed. Alice found herself sitting in a railway carriage. A Guard put his head in at the window and called, "Tickets, please!" At once all the other passengers held out their tickets. The tickets were so large that they almost filled the whole carriage.

"Now then, show your ticket, child!" said the Guard, looking angrily at Alice. Alice felt frightened and said, "I am afraid I do not have one. There was no ticket office where I came from." All the passengers spoke together, like a strange chorus. They said there was no room for a ticket office there, because the land was worth a thousand pounds an inch.

"Do not make excuses," said the Guard. "You should have bought a ticket from the engine driver." Then the passengers spoke together again. They said the smoke from the engine alone was worth a thousand pounds each time it came out. Alice thought it was useless to say anything more. To her surprise, the passengers seemed to think together too, and their silent thought said that language was worth a thousand pounds a word.

The Guard looked at Alice in several strange ways. First he looked through a telescope. Then he looked through a microscope. Then he looked through a small opera glass. At last he said, "You are travelling the wrong way," and shut the window.

A gentleman sitting opposite Alice spoke next. He was dressed in white paper. "A child as young as you should know which way she is going," he said, "even if she does not know her own name." A Goat beside him shut his eyes and said Alice should know the way to the ticket office, even if she did not know the alphabet. A Beetle added that Alice would have to go back as luggage.

Alice could not see all the other passengers, but she heard more voices. One voice sounded like a horse and said something about changing engines. A very small voice near Alice's ear told her she could make a joke about "horse" and

“hoarse.” Alice did not feel like making jokes. Then a gentle voice far away said that Alice should be marked “Lass, with care,” as if she were a parcel.

More passengers gave more foolish advice. One said Alice should go by post because she had a head. Another said she should be sent by telegraph. Another said she should pull the train herself for the rest of the journey. The paper gentleman leaned forward and whispered kindly that she should buy a return ticket every time the train stopped.

“I shall do no such thing,” Alice said. “I do not belong to this railway journey at all. I was in a wood just now, and I wish I could get back there.” The small voice near her ear wanted her to make another joke. Alice looked around, but she could not see who was speaking. “If you want a joke so much,” she said, “why do you not make one yourself?”

The little voice sighed in a very sad way. It was such a small sigh that Alice would not have heard it if it had not been close to her ear. It tickled her ear and made her forget to feel sorry for the little creature. Then the voice said, “I know you are a friend. You will not hurt me, even though I am an insect.”

“What kind of insect are you?” Alice asked carefully. She really wanted to know if it could sting, but she thought that would not be polite. Before the small voice could answer, the engine gave a loud scream. Everyone jumped up in fear, including Alice. The Horse calmly put his head back inside the window and said, “It is only a stream we have to jump over.”

Alice did not like the idea of a train jumping at all. But she tried to comfort herself by thinking that this would take her into the Fourth Square. Then she felt the carriage rise straight up into the air. In her fright she caught the nearest thing she could reach. It happened to be the Goat’s beard.

But the beard seemed to melt away in her hand. Alice found herself sitting quietly under a tree. Above her, a very large Gnat balanced on a twig and fanned her with its wings. It was about the size of a chicken, which was not very comforting. Still, Alice was not too afraid, because they had already been talking for some time.

“So you do not like all insects?” the Gnat asked, as calmly as if nothing strange

had happened. Alice said she liked insects when they could talk, because insects did not talk where she came from. The Gnat asked what insects made her happy. Alice said insects did not really make her happy, but she could name some of them.

“There is the Horse-fly,” Alice began. The Gnat told her to look at a bush, where she would see a Rocking-horse-fly. It was made of wood and moved by swinging from branch to branch. Alice asked what it lived on. “Sap and sawdust,” said the Gnat, and told her to go on.

“There is the Dragon-fly,” Alice said next. The Gnat told her to look above her head. There she saw a Snap-dragon-fly. Its body was made of plum pudding, its wings were green leaves, and its head was like a raisin on fire. The Gnat said it lived on sweet Christmas food and made its nest in a Christmas box.

Then Alice named the Butterfly. The Gnat pointed to the ground near her feet, and Alice quickly drew her feet back. There was a Bread-and-butterfly. Its wings were thin pieces of bread and butter, its body was a crust, and its head was a lump of sugar. The Gnat said it lived on weak tea with cream in it.

Alice thought of a problem. “What if it cannot find any weak tea?” she asked. “Then it dies, of course,” said the Gnat. Alice said that must happen very often. “It always happens,” said the Gnat. After that, Alice sat silently for a little while and thought.

The Gnat flew around her head and then came back to the twig. “I suppose you do not want to lose your name,” it said. Alice felt a little worried and said she certainly did not. The Gnat said it might be useful to go home without a name. If a teacher called her to lessons, the teacher would not know what name to call, and Alice would not have to go.

Alice did not think this would work. “If she could not remember my name, she would call me ‘Miss,’” she said. The Gnat answered that if the teacher said “Miss,” then Alice would miss her lessons. “That is a joke,” said the Gnat. “I wish you had made it.” Alice said it was a very bad joke, and the poor Gnat sighed so deeply that tears ran down its face.

“You should not make jokes if they make you unhappy,” Alice said. The Gnat gave another sad little sigh. This time it seemed to sigh itself away. When Alice

looked up, nothing was sitting on the twig anymore. She felt cold from sitting still so long, so she stood up and walked on.

Soon Alice came to an open field, and beyond it was a darker wood. She felt a little afraid of entering it. But she did not want to go back, and the way forward was the only way to the Eighth Square. “This must be the wood where things have no names,” she said to herself. “I wonder what will happen to my name when I go in.”

As soon as Alice stepped under the trees, something strange happened. She wanted to say that it was pleasant to be under the trees, but she could not remember the word “trees.” She put her hand on the trunk and tried again. Still the word would not come. Then she understood that the thing before her had no name in that wood.

“Then it really has happened,” Alice said. “Now, who am I?” She tried very hard to remember. Being determined did not help at all. After a long time, she could only say, “I know it begins with L.” This was not very useful, and it made her feel sad.

Just then a Fawn came walking by. It looked at Alice with large gentle eyes and did not seem afraid. Alice held out her hand and tried to stroke it, but the Fawn stepped back a little. Then it asked in a soft sweet voice, “What do you call yourself?” Alice answered sadly, “Nothing, just now.”

The Fawn said that answer would not do. Alice asked the Fawn to tell her its name, because that might help. The Fawn said it would tell her if they moved a little farther on. It could not remember in that place either. So they walked together through the wood.

Alice put her arms lovingly around the Fawn’s soft neck. They walked quietly side by side, and Alice felt very happy with her gentle new friend. Then they came out of the wood into another open field. At once the Fawn jumped into the air and pulled away from Alice’s arms. “I am a Fawn!” it cried. “And, oh dear, you are a human child!”

Fear came into the Fawn’s beautiful brown eyes. In another moment it ran away as fast as it could. Alice stood looking after it and almost cried. She was

sorry to lose her dear little companion so suddenly. Still, she had remembered her own name again, and that was some comfort.

“Alice,” she said to herself. “Alice. I will not forget it again.” Then she looked around for the right road. There was only one road through the wood, and two signs both pointed along it. One sign said, “To Tweedledum’s house,” and the other said, “To the house of Tweedledee.”

“I believe they live in the same house,” said Alice. “I wonder I did not think of that before.” She decided she would not stay there long. She would only say hello and ask the way out of the wood. She wanted very much to reach the Eighth Square before dark.

Alice walked on, talking softly to herself as she went. The road turned sharply, and suddenly she saw two fat little men before her. She stepped back in surprise, because they had appeared so quickly. But after a moment she felt sure she knew who they were. They had to be Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Part 4 — Tweedledum, Tweedledee, and the Sleeping King

The two little men stood under a tree. Each had one arm round the other’s neck, and they looked almost exactly the same. Alice knew which was which because one had “DUM” on his collar, and the other had “DEE.” She thought that each of them probably had “TWEEDLE” written on the back.

They stood so still that Alice almost forgot they were alive. She was just trying to look behind their collars when one of them suddenly spoke. “If you think we are wax figures,” said the one marked “DUM,” “you should pay to look at us.” Then the one marked “DEE” added, “And if you think we are alive, you should speak to us.”

“I am very sorry,” said Alice. She tried to be polite, but an old rhyme was already running through her head. It sounded in her mind like the tick of a clock. She could hardly stop herself from saying it aloud.

Tweedledum and Tweedledee

Agreed that they would fight.
Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his new toy that night.

But then a giant black crow came,
As dark as dark could be.
It frightened both the brave small men,
And both of them ran free.

“I know what you are thinking,” said Tweedledum. “But it is not true. No way.” Tweedledee said, “The other way round: if it was true, it might be true; and if it were true, it would be true. But it is not true, so it is not. That is logic.”

Alice did not think this helped very much. “I was thinking about the best way out of this wood,” she said politely. “It is getting dark. Could you please tell me the way?” But the two little men only looked at each other and smiled in a very unhelpful way.

They looked so much like two large schoolboys that Alice pointed to Tweedledum and said, “First boy.” “No way!” cried Tweedledum, and shut his mouth with a snap. Then Alice turned to Tweedledee and said, “Next boy.” She felt sure he would answer in the other way, and he did.

“You have done it wrong,” cried Tweedledum. “The first thing in a visit is to say, ‘How do you do?’ and shake hands.” The two brothers hugged each other first. Then each held out one free hand to Alice. Alice did not want to hurt either brother’s feelings by taking one hand first, so she took both hands at the same time.

The next moment, all three of them were dancing in a ring. Alice was not as surprised as she should have been. Music seemed to come from the tree above them, as if the branches were playing like violins. Somehow Alice found herself singing a song about going round a bush, though she did not know when she had begun.

The two brothers were fat, and they soon became tired. “Four times round is

enough for one dance,” said Tweedledum, breathing hard. They stopped as suddenly as they had begun, and the music stopped too. Then they let go of Alice’s hands and stood looking at her.

There was an awkward silence. Alice did not know how to begin talking to people she had just been dancing with. She thought it was too late to say, “How do you do?” So at last she said, “I hope you are not very tired.” Tweedledum thanked her, and Tweedledee asked if she liked poetry.

“Yes,” said Alice slowly. “Some poetry.” Then she tried again to ask about the road out of the wood. But Tweedledee did not answer her question. He looked at his brother and asked what poem he should say. Tweedledum answered that “The Walrus and the Carpenter” was the longest.

Tweedledee began at once. Alice tried to stop him politely. “If it is very long,” she said, “could you first tell me which road—” But Tweedledee only smiled gently and began again. Alice saw that she would have to listen.

The sun shone brightly on the sea,
It shone with all its might.
It tried to make the waves look clear,
Though it was deep midnight.

The moon was cross and cold that night,
She thought the sun was wrong.
“He should not come out after day.
He has stayed out too long.”

The sea was wet, the sand was dry,
No cloud was in the sky.
No birds were flying overhead;
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter

Walked close along the sand.
They cried to see so much of it
Spread out across the land.

“If someone swept this sand away,”
They said, “it would be grand.”
“Seven girls with seven mops
Could try it by the strand.”

“But could they clean it all away
In half a year?” one cried.
“I do not think so,” said his friend,
And wiped his tears aside.

“Come walk with us, dear Oysters,”
The Walrus called with care.
“We need a pleasant talk with you
Beside the salty air.”

The oldest Oyster looked at him,
But did not speak a word.
He winked his eye and shook his head;
He thought the plan absurd.

But four young Oysters hurried out,
All ready for the treat.
Their coats were clean, their faces bright,
Though they had no feet.

Then four more Oysters followed them,
And then came many more.

They hurried through the shining waves
And climbed upon the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so.
Then all sat down upon a rock
That was quite smooth and low.

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“To talk of many things:
Of shoes and ships and sealing wax,
Of cabbages and kings.”

“But wait,” the Oysters softly cried,
“Before our talk can start.
We all are tired from walking here,
And we must rest our hearts.”

“No hurry,” said the Carpenter.
The Oysters thanked him then.
They did not know how soon they would
Wish to be home again.

“A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,
“Is what we mostly need.
Some pepper and some vinegar
Are very good indeed.”

“But not on us!” the Oysters cried.
Their faces turned quite blue.
“After your kindness, eating us

Would be a cruel thing to do.”

“The night is fine,” the Walrus said.

“Look at the lovely view.”

The Carpenter said nothing much,
But asked for one more slice or two.

“It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,

“To play this trick today.

We brought them out so far from home,
And made them walk this way.”

The Carpenter said nothing more

About the Oysters’ pain.

He only looked down at his bread
And said, “Too much again.”

“I weep for you,” the Walrus said,

And tears fell from his eyes.

But as he cried, he chose the ones
That were the largest size.

“Dear Oysters,” said the Carpenter,

“You had a pleasant run.

Shall we go walking home again?”

But answer came from none.

And this was not so strange at all,

Though sad it was to say.

For every single Oyster there
Had now been eaten away.

Alice thought about the poem for a moment. "I like the Walrus better," she said, "because he was a little sorry for the poor Oysters." Tweedledee answered that the Walrus had eaten more than the Carpenter. He had held his handkerchief in front of his face, so the Carpenter could not count how many he took.

"That was very mean," said Alice. "Then I like the Carpenter better, if he did not eat so many." Tweedledum said the Carpenter had eaten as many as he could get. This made the question very difficult. After a pause, Alice said, "Well, they were both very unpleasant people."

She stopped suddenly because she heard a deep puffing sound in the wood. It sounded a little like a large engine, but she was afraid it might be a wild animal. "Are there lions or tigers here?" she asked in a low voice. "It is only the Red King snoring," said Tweedledee.

"Come and look at him," cried the brothers. They each took one of Alice's hands and led her to a place where the Red King was sleeping. Alice could not honestly say that he looked lovely. He had a tall red nightcap on his head and lay in an untidy heap on the grass, snoring very loudly.

"I am afraid he will catch cold," Alice said, "lying on the damp grass like that." Tweedledee said, "He is dreaming now. What do you think he is dreaming about?" Alice answered that nobody could guess such a thing. "He is dreaming about you," cried Tweedledee, clapping his hands.

Alice did not like this answer. Tweedledee said that if the King stopped dreaming about her, she would be nowhere at all. "You are only a thing in his dream," he said. Tweedledum added that if the King woke up, Alice would go out like a candle flame. Alice felt very angry and said she was real.

"If I am only a thing in his dream," she said, "what are you?" Tweedledum said, "The same." Tweedledee shouted, "The same, the same!" Alice told him to be quiet, because he might wake the King. But the brothers only said that Alice had no right to talk about waking him, since she was not real.

"I am real," Alice said, and began to cry. Tweedledee told her that crying would not make her more real. Alice half laughed through her tears, because the idea was

so foolish. She thought they were only talking nonsense, and she wiped her eyes. Then she said she had better get out of the wood, because it was becoming very dark.

“Do you think it will rain?” Alice asked. Tweedledum opened a large umbrella over himself and his brother, then looked up inside it. “No,” he said, “not under here.” Alice asked if it might rain outside the umbrella. Tweedledee said it might, if it wanted to, and they had no objection.

Alice thought this was very selfish. She was just going to say good night and leave them when Tweedledum jumped out from under the umbrella. He caught Alice by the wrist and pointed to a small white thing under the tree. His eyes looked large and angry.

“Do you see that?” he cried. Alice looked carefully and said, “It is only a rattle. Not a rattlesnake, you know. Only an old broken toy.” She said this because she thought he was afraid of it, but this was not the problem at all.

“I knew it!” cried Tweedledum. He stamped about and pulled at his hair. “It is spoiled!” Then he looked at Tweedledee, who sat down on the ground and tried to hide under the umbrella. Alice put her hand gently on Tweedledum’s arm and said, “You do not need to be so angry about an old toy.”

“It is not old!” cried Tweedledum. “It is new. I bought it yesterday. My nice new rattle!” His voice rose higher and higher until it was almost a scream. While he shouted, Tweedledee tried to fold up the umbrella with himself inside it.

This was such a strange thing to do that Alice almost forgot the angry brother. Tweedledee could not fold it properly. In the end, he rolled over inside the umbrella, with only his head showing. He opened and shut his mouth and his large eyes, and Alice thought he looked more like a fish than a boy.

“Of course you agree to fight,” Tweedledum said more calmly. “I suppose so,” said Tweedledee, crawling out of the umbrella. “But she must help us dress for battle.” The two brothers went into the wood hand in hand. In a minute they came back carrying blankets, rugs, cloths, covers, and many other strange things.

Alice had never seen so much trouble made over anything. The brothers hurried about, and Alice had to tie strings and fasten things wherever she could.

She tied a cushion round Tweedledee's neck, because he said it would keep his head from being cut off. Alice laughed, but quickly turned the laugh into a cough, because she did not want to hurt his feelings.

"Do I look very pale?" asked Tweedledum, coming to have his helmet tied on. He called it a helmet, though it looked very much like a saucepan. Alice said gently that he looked a little pale. Tweedledum said he was usually very brave, but today he happened to have a headache.

"And I have a toothache," cried Tweedledee. "I am worse than you." Alice thought this was a good chance to stop the fight. "Then you had better not fight today," she said. But Tweedledum said they must have a little fight, though he did not care to fight for long.

Tweedledee looked at his watch and said it was half past four. "Let us fight until six," said Tweedledum, "and then have dinner." Tweedledee agreed rather sadly. He told Alice not to come too close, because when he became excited, he usually hit everything he could see. Tweedledum added that he hit everything he could reach, whether he could see it or not.

Alice laughed and said they must hit the trees quite often. Tweedledum looked around with a pleased smile. He said that by the time they had finished, there would not be a tree standing anywhere near them. "And all about a rattle," said Alice, still hoping to make them ashamed. Tweedledum only answered that he would not have minded so much if it had not been new.

Alice began to wish the giant crow would come. Tweedledum told his brother that there was only one sword, but the umbrella would do just as well for the other weapon. They had to begin quickly, because it was getting very dark. "And darker," said Tweedledee.

The darkness came so suddenly that Alice thought there must be a storm. She looked up and saw a thick black cloud coming fast across the sky. Then she noticed something worse. "Why," she cried, "I believe it has wings!" Tweedledum screamed that it was the crow, and in a moment both brothers ran away.

Alice ran a little way into the wood and stopped under a large tree. She thought the crow could not reach her there, because it was too big to come between the

trees. Still, she wished it would stop beating its wings. The wind from them rushed through the wood like a storm. Then Alice saw something soft and loose blowing past her in the air, and it looked very much like someone's shawl.

Part 5 — The White Queen, the Shop, and the River

Alice caught the shawl as it blew past her. She looked around to see who had lost it. In another moment the White Queen came running through the wood with both arms stretched out, almost as if she were trying to fly. Alice went to meet her and held out the shawl very politely.

"I am glad I was here to catch it," Alice said, as she helped the Queen put it on again. The White Queen looked frightened and helpless. She kept saying something softly to herself, and it sounded like "bread and butter, bread and butter." Alice felt that if there was going to be any real talk, she would have to begin it herself.

"Am I speaking to the White Queen?" Alice asked. The Queen answered in a strange way, because she thought Alice was talking about dressing her. Alice did not want to argue at the very beginning, so she smiled and said, "Please tell me the right way to begin, and I will try." But the poor Queen only groaned and said she had been trying to dress herself for two hours.

Alice looked at her more carefully. Everything about the Queen was crooked. Her shawl was not straight, her pins were in the wrong places, and her hair was in a terrible state. Alice asked if she might put the shawl right, and the Queen said sadly that the shawl must be in a bad mood.

"It cannot sit straight if you pin it all on one side," Alice said. She gently moved the shawl and fixed the pins. Then she noticed a brush caught in the Queen's hair. The Queen said she had lost her comb the day before, so Alice carefully pulled the brush free and tried to make the hair look better.

"You look much better now," Alice said at last. "But really, you should have someone to help you dress." The Queen immediately said she would gladly take Alice as her helper. She offered her two pennies a week and jam every other day.

Alice laughed and said she did not want the job, and she did not care much for jam.

“It is very good jam,” said the Queen. Alice said she did not want any today. “You could not have it today, even if you wanted it,” said the Queen. “The rule is jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today.” Alice said there must sometimes be jam today, but the Queen said today was never any other day.

Alice found this very confusing. The Queen said kindly that this was what happened when one lived backward. Alice was greatly surprised. The Queen explained that living backward had one good point: memory could work both ways. Alice said her memory only worked backward, because she could not remember things before they happened.

The Queen said that was a poor kind of memory. She said she remembered best the things that happened the week after next. Then she spoke about the King’s Messenger. He was already in prison, though his trial would not begin until next Wednesday, and the crime would come last of all.

“What if he never does the crime?” Alice asked. “That would be better,” said the Queen. Alice agreed that it would be better, but she did not think it would be better for him to be punished first. The Queen said Alice was wrong. She asked if Alice had ever been punished, and Alice answered that she had only been punished for things she had done.

The Queen said Alice had surely been better after being punished. Alice said that was different, because she had really done the wrong things first. The Queen answered that if Alice had not done them, that would have been even better. Her voice went higher and higher as she said “better” again and again, until it became almost a squeak.

Alice was just going to say that something was wrong with this idea, but the Queen suddenly began to scream. She cried so loudly that Alice had to put both hands over her ears. “What is the matter?” Alice asked when she could speak. “Have you hurt your finger?” The Queen said she had not hurt it yet, but she soon would.

This made Alice want to laugh, though she tried not to. The Queen said she

would hurt her finger when she fastened her shawl again. Just then the brooch flew open, and the Queen caught it in a wild hurry. Alice cried, "Be careful! You are holding it crooked!" But the warning came too late. The pin slipped, and the Queen pricked her finger.

"Now you understand," said the Queen with a smile. "That is why my finger was bleeding before." Alice asked why she was not screaming now. "I have already done all the screaming," said the Queen. "What good would it do to do it again?" Alice thought this was one of the strangest answers she had ever heard.

By this time the sky was getting light again. Alice was glad, because she thought the great crow must have flown away. She told the Queen that she had thought night was coming. The Queen wished she could be glad too, but she said she could never remember the rule for it. Alice said the wood was lonely, and as she thought of being alone, two large tears rolled down her face.

"Do not cry," cried the Queen, wringing her hands. "Think about how big you are. Think about how far you have come today. Think about what time it is. Think about anything, only do not cry." Alice could not help laughing a little through her tears. The Queen said no one could do two things at once, so thinking was the best way to stop crying.

Then the Queen asked Alice's age. Alice said she was seven and a half exactly. The Queen said Alice did not need to say "exactly," because she could believe it without that. Then she told Alice that she herself was one hundred and one years old, five months, and one day. Alice said honestly that she could not believe it.

"Try again," said the Queen. "Take a long breath and shut your eyes." Alice laughed and said it was no use trying to believe impossible things. The Queen said Alice had not had enough practice. When the Queen was Alice's age, she sometimes believed six impossible things before breakfast.

Just then the Queen's shawl came loose again. A sudden wind blew it across a little stream. The Queen spread out her arms and flew after it. This time she caught it herself and cried proudly that Alice should watch her pin it on alone. Alice crossed the little stream after her and politely asked if her finger was better.

"Much better," cried the Queen. But as she spoke, her voice rose higher and

higher. The word “better” changed into a long strange sound, and then into a clear sheep’s cry. Alice started and looked hard at the Queen. The Queen seemed to be wrapped all over in wool.

Alice rubbed her eyes and looked again. She could not understand what had happened. The wood had gone, and she was in a small dark shop. She was leaning with her elbows on a counter. On the other side sat an old Sheep in an armchair, knitting and looking at Alice through large spectacles.

“What do you want to buy?” the Sheep asked at last. Alice answered gently that she did not quite know yet. She wanted to look around first. The Sheep said she could look in front and on both sides, but she could not look all around unless she had eyes in the back of her head. Alice had no such eyes, so she turned carefully and looked at the shelves.

The shop was full of strange things. But the strangest thing was this: whenever Alice looked hard at one shelf, that shelf became empty. The shelves near it were crowded with things, but the shelf she wanted to see had nothing on it. Alice followed a bright object with her eyes, but it always moved to the shelf above the one she was watching.

“Things move about so much here,” Alice said sadly. She decided to follow the bright object all the way to the top shelf. She thought it could not go through the ceiling. But it did exactly that, as quietly as if it often went through ceilings. Alice felt a little cross with the shop.

The Sheep asked if Alice was a child or a spinning top. She said Alice would make her dizzy if she kept turning round. As the Sheep spoke, she took up more knitting needles. Soon she was knitting with so many pairs at once that Alice stared at her in wonder. The Sheep looked more and more like a small sharp animal covered with needles.

“Can you row?” the Sheep asked, handing Alice a pair of knitting needles. Alice began to answer that she could row a little, but not on land and not with needles. Before she could finish, the needles changed into oars in her hands. The shop disappeared, and Alice found herself in a little boat moving between high river banks.

The Sheep cried, "Feather!" Alice did not understand what this meant, so she said nothing and pulled at the oars. The water was very strange. Sometimes the oars stuck in it and would hardly come out. The Sheep cried "Feather!" again and said Alice would soon catch a crab.

Alice thought a little crab would be a nice thing to catch. She asked where the crabs were. The Sheep said they were in the water, of course, and again cried, "Feather!" At last Alice asked why she kept saying that word, because Alice was not a bird. "You are," said the Sheep. "You are a little goose."

Alice felt a little offended, so for a while there was no more talk. The boat moved gently along the river. Sometimes it passed through thick water plants that caught the oars. Sometimes it passed under trees, while the tall banks rose darkly above them on both sides.

Then Alice saw some lovely rushes growing in the water. She cried out with delight and asked if they could stop to pick some. The Sheep said she had not put the rushes there and was not going to take them away. Alice explained that she only wanted the boat to stop for a minute. The Sheep said the boat would stop by itself if Alice stopped rowing.

So Alice stopped rowing, and the boat drifted among the rushes. She rolled up her sleeves and put her arms deep into the cool water. She forgot the Sheep and the knitting for a while. Her hair dipped into the water, and her eyes shone as she reached for one beautiful bunch after another.

Still, the prettiest rush was always just too far away. Alice could pick many lovely ones, but another better one always stood beyond her reach. At last she climbed back into the boat with wet hands, wet hair, and red cheeks. She began to arrange the rushes happily at her feet.

But the rushes began to fade almost as soon as she picked them. Their sweet smell and beauty disappeared very quickly. Because they were dream-rushes, they seemed to melt away like snow. Alice hardly noticed, because there were so many other strange things around her.

A little later, one of the oars stuck fast in the water. It would not come out. The handle suddenly hit Alice under the chin and pushed her off her seat. She cried

out several times and fell down among the rushes. Luckily she was not hurt, and soon she was sitting up again.

The Sheep went on knitting as if nothing had happened. “That was a nice crab you caught,” she said. Alice looked carefully over the side of the boat, hoping to see it. She said she would have liked to take a little crab home with her. The Sheep only laughed in a sharp, unkind way.

Alice asked if there were many crabs there. “Crabs and all sorts of things,” said the Sheep. “You have plenty to choose from. Now, what do you want to buy?” Alice repeated, “To buy?” She was half surprised and half frightened, because the boat, the oars, and the river had all vanished. She was back in the dark little shop.

Alice decided she would buy an egg. She asked the price as politely as she could. The Sheep said one egg cost fivepence farthing, but two eggs cost twopence. Alice was surprised that two were cheaper than one. The Sheep said that if Alice bought two, she would have to eat both of them.

“Then I will have one, please,” said Alice. She put the money on the counter, because she thought the egg might not taste very good. The Sheep took the money and put it away in a box. Then she said she never put things into people’s hands. Alice would have to get the egg for herself.

The Sheep went to the far end of the shop and placed the egg upright on a shelf. Alice walked toward it through the dark shop. But the egg seemed to move farther away the nearer she came. She touched what she thought was a chair and found that it had branches.

“How strange,” Alice said. “There are trees growing in this shop.” Then she saw a little stream too. Every step made the place stranger. Tables and chairs turned into trees as soon as she came near them, and Alice walked on, wondering more and more.

The egg was still in front of her, but it seemed to be changing too. Alice expected it to turn into a tree, like everything else in the shop. She went slowly forward, watching it carefully. The dark shop, the shelves, the counter, and the Sheep were now all behind her, and Alice was ready for the next strange thing to happen.

Part 6 — Humpty Dumpty and the Meanings of Words

The egg did not turn into a tree. Instead, it grew larger and larger as Alice came nearer. Soon it had eyes, a nose, and a mouth. When Alice stood close to it, she saw clearly that it was Humpty Dumpty himself. “It cannot be anyone else,” she thought. “His name might almost be written all over his face.”

Humpty Dumpty was sitting on top of a high wall. His legs were crossed, and the wall was so narrow that Alice wondered how he could stay there. He was looking the other way and did not notice her at all. For a moment Alice almost thought he was not alive.

“How exactly like an egg he is,” Alice said aloud. She held her hands ready, because she expected him to fall at any moment. After a long silence, Humpty Dumpty spoke without looking at her. “It is very annoying,” he said, “to be called an egg. Very annoying.”

“I only said you looked like an egg,” Alice explained gently. “And some eggs are very pretty, you know.” She hoped this would sound like a kind thing to say. But Humpty Dumpty only looked away and said that some people had no more sense than babies.

Alice did not know what to answer. It did not feel like a real conversation, because he did not seem to be speaking to her. He seemed almost to be speaking to a tree. So Alice stood quietly and repeated the old rhyme to herself.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King’s horses and all the King’s men
Could not put Humpty together again.

“That last line is too long for the poem,” Alice said, almost aloud. She forgot that Humpty Dumpty might hear her. He turned and looked at her for the first time. “Do not stand there talking to yourself,” he said. “Tell me your name and your

business.”

“My name is Alice,” she began. But Humpty Dumpty stopped her at once. “That is a stupid name,” he said. “What does it mean?” Alice asked doubtfully whether a name had to mean something. Humpty Dumpty laughed and said that of course it did.

“My name means my shape,” he said. “And it is a good, handsome shape too. But with a name like yours, you might be almost any shape.” Alice did not want to argue about her name. So she asked why he was sitting alone on the wall.

“Because nobody is with me,” cried Humpty Dumpty. “Did you think I did not know the answer to that?” Alice tried another question. She asked if he would not be safer on the ground. The wall was very narrow, and she felt truly worried that he might fall.

Humpty Dumpty said she was asking very easy questions. Of course he did not think he would be safer on the ground. Then he spoke very proudly. If he did fall, he said, though there was no chance of it, the King had promised with his own mouth to help him.

“To send all his horses and all his men,” Alice said before she thought. This was not wise. Humpty Dumpty became very angry. He said Alice must have been listening behind doors, behind trees, or down chimneys, because she could not have known it in any other way.

“No, truly,” Alice said gently. “It is in a book.” This calmed him a little. He said books might write such things, and he called it history. Then he told Alice to look at him well, because she might never again see someone who had spoken to a King.

To show that he was not proud, Humpty Dumpty leaned forward and offered Alice his hand. He leaned so far that Alice was afraid he would fall. She took his hand carefully and watched his wide smile. She thought that if his mouth smiled much more, the two ends might meet behind his head.

Humpty Dumpty went on saying that the King’s horses and men would pick him up at once if he fell. Then he said the talk was going too fast and they should go back to an earlier remark. Alice politely said that she could not quite remember

it. "Then we begin again," said Humpty Dumpty. "Now it is my turn to choose a subject."

He asked Alice how old she had said she was. Alice thought for a moment and answered, "Seven years and six months." Humpty Dumpty cried, "Wrong!" Alice explained that she thought he meant how old she was. He answered that if he had meant that, he would have said it.

Alice decided not to argue. Humpty Dumpty said seven years and six months was an uncomfortable age. If Alice had asked his advice, he would have told her to stop at seven. Alice said she never asked advice about growing older. Humpty Dumpty asked if she was too proud, which made Alice feel even more annoyed.

Alice said that people could not help growing older. Humpty Dumpty said that one person perhaps could not, but two people could. With the right help, he said, Alice might have stopped at seven. Alice felt that they had talked enough about age, so she quickly looked for another subject.

"What a beautiful belt you have," she said. Then she saw that this might be wrong and tried to correct herself. "I mean, what a beautiful neck scarf. No, I mean a belt. I am sorry." This was difficult because Humpty Dumpty was shaped so round that Alice could not tell where his neck ended and his middle began.

Humpty Dumpty became deeply offended. For a minute or two he said nothing. Then he spoke in a low angry voice. "It is very annoying when a person does not know a neck scarf from a belt," he said. Alice answered very humbly that she knew she was being ignorant.

This made Humpty Dumpty a little kinder. He said it was a neck scarf, and a beautiful one. It had been a present from the White King and the White Queen. Alice was glad she had found a good subject at last. Then Humpty Dumpty said it had been an un-birthday present.

Alice did not understand this. Humpty Dumpty explained that an un-birthday present was a present given on a day that was not your birthday. Alice thought about it and said she liked birthday presents best. Humpty Dumpty told her she did not know what she was talking about.

He asked how many days there were in a year. Alice answered, "Three hundred

and sixty-five.” Then he asked how many birthdays she had. Alice answered, “One.” Humpty Dumpty asked what was left if one was taken away from three hundred and sixty-five, and Alice answered, “Three hundred and sixty-four.”

Humpty Dumpty looked doubtful and said he would like to see it written down. Alice took out her little notebook and wrote the sum for him. He looked at it carefully, but Alice had to tell him he was holding the book upside down. He turned it round and said the answer seemed right, though he had no time to check it fully.

“So there are three hundred and sixty-four days for un-birthday presents,” he said. “And only one day for birthday presents. There is glory for you.” Alice said she did not know what he meant by “glory.” Humpty Dumpty smiled as if she were very foolish and said he meant that it was a strong argument.

“But glory does not mean a strong argument,” Alice said. Humpty Dumpty answered in a proud voice, “When I use a word, it means exactly what I choose it to mean.” Alice said the question was whether he could make words mean so many different things. Humpty Dumpty said the real question was who was master.

Alice was too puzzled to answer. After a moment Humpty Dumpty said that some words had difficult tempers, especially verbs. He said adjectives were easier, but he could manage all words. Then he used a very long word and looked pleased with himself.

“Please tell me what that means,” said Alice. Humpty Dumpty said she was now talking like a reasonable child. He explained that the long word meant they had talked enough about that subject, and Alice should say what she was going to do next, because she surely did not mean to stay there forever. Alice thought this was a great deal of meaning for one word.

“When I make a word do a lot of work,” said Humpty Dumpty, “I pay it extra.” Alice did not know what to say to that. Humpty Dumpty added that words came to him on Saturday nights to receive their pay. Alice did not ask what he paid them with, because she was afraid the answer would only make things worse.

Alice remembered the strange poem she had read in the mirror book. “You seem very good at explaining words,” she said. “Could you please explain the

poem called ‘Jabberwocky’?” Humpty Dumpty looked very pleased. He said he could explain all poems ever made, and many poems not yet made.

Alice repeated the first verse, using the strange words from the mirror book.

At brillig time, the slithy toves
Did turn and dig beside the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“That is enough to begin with,” said Humpty Dumpty. “There are plenty of hard words there.” He said “brillig” meant four o’clock in the afternoon, the time when people begin cooking things for dinner. Alice asked about “slithy.” He said it meant both smooth and active, with two meanings packed into one word.

Then Alice asked what “toves” were. Humpty Dumpty said they were something like badgers, something like lizards, and something like corkscrews. They made their homes under sundials and lived on cheese. Alice thought they must be very strange-looking creatures.

Humpty Dumpty explained more words. To “gyre” meant to go round and round. To “gimble” meant to make holes. Alice guessed that “wabe” meant the grass around a sundial, and Humpty Dumpty said that was right. He explained that it was called “wabe” because it went a long way before, behind, and on both sides.

Then he said “mimsy” meant both weak and miserable. A “borogove” was a thin untidy bird with feathers sticking out all around, like a living mop. A “rath” was a kind of green pig. He was not quite sure about “mome,” but he thought it might mean away from home, because the raths had lost their way.

Alice asked what “outgrabe” meant. Humpty Dumpty said it was a sound between a cry and a whistle, with something like a sneeze in the middle. He said Alice might hear it in the wood. Once she had heard it, he said, she would be quite satisfied and would not want to hear it again.

Humpty Dumpty asked who had been repeating such hard words to her. Alice

said she had read them in a book. Then she said Tweedledee had recited a much easier poem to her. Humpty Dumpty stretched out one of his large hands and said that he could recite poetry as well as anyone else.

Alice quickly said that he did not need to do so. But Humpty Dumpty did not notice her answer. He said the poem he was going to recite had been written entirely for her amusement. Alice felt that she had to listen after that. So she sat down and thanked him, though not very happily.

In winter, when the fields are white,
I sing this song for your delight.

“But I am not singing it,” Humpty Dumpty added. Alice said that she could see he was not. Humpty Dumpty answered sharply that if she could see whether he was singing or not, she had better eyes than most people. Alice became silent, and he went on.

In spring, when woods are growing green,
I try to say what I may mean.

In summer, when the days are long,
Perhaps you will understand the song.

In autumn, when the leaves fall brown,
Take pen and ink and write it down.

Alice said she would do so if she could remember it for that long. Humpty Dumpty told her not to keep making remarks, because they were not sensible and they put him out. Then he began the real story of the poem. Alice listened carefully, though she was not sure it would become much clearer.

I sent a message to the fish.

I said, "This is my only wish."

The little fishes in the sea
Sent back this answer straight to me.

The little fishes answered thus:
"We cannot do that thing, because—"

Alice said softly that she did not quite understand. Humpty Dumpty told her it became easier later. Then he continued in a louder voice, as if the poem were becoming more serious. Alice folded her hands in her lap and tried very hard not to interrupt him again.

I sent again to them to say,
"It would be best if you obey."

The fishes answered with a grin,
"Why are you in this angry skin?"

I told them once, I told them twice.
They would not listen to advice.

I took a kettle, large and new,
To do the thing I had to do.

My heart went hop, my heart went thump.
I filled the kettle at the pump.

Then someone came to me and said,
"The little fish are now in bed."

I said to him, both loud and plain,
“Then wake them up at once again.”

I said it clearly in his ear.
I shouted so that he could hear.

Humpty Dumpty raised his voice almost to a scream when he said the last lines. Alice felt sorry for the messenger in the poem. She thought she would not like to have someone shout into her ear like that. But Humpty Dumpty went straight on, looking more important than ever.

But he was stiff, and he was proud.
He said, “You need not shout so loud.”

And he was proud, and he was stiff.
He said, “I would wake them, if—”

I took a tool down from the shelf.
I went to wake them up myself.

And when I found the door was locked,
I pushed and pulled and kicked and knocked.

And when I found the door was shut,
I tried the handle, but, but, but—

There was a long pause. Alice waited, expecting the rest of the poem. Humpty Dumpty said nothing. At last she asked timidly, “Is that all?” Humpty Dumpty answered, “That is all. Good-bye.”

This was very sudden, but Alice understood the hint. She stood up and held out her hand. “Good-bye, until we meet again,” she said as cheerfully as she could.

Humpty Dumpty gave her one finger to shake and said he would not know her again if they did meet, because she looked exactly like other people.

Alice said that people usually knew one another by the face. Humpty Dumpty said that was just what he disliked. Alice's face was like every face, with two eyes, a nose in the middle, and a mouth below. He said it would help if both eyes were on the same side of the nose, or if the mouth were at the top.

"That would not look nice," Alice said. Humpty Dumpty only shut his eyes and told her to wait until she had tried it. Alice waited a moment to see if he would speak again. But he kept his eyes shut and took no more notice of her.

Alice said good-bye once more, but he did not answer. So she walked away quietly. As she went, she said to herself that he was one of the most unsatisfactory people she had ever met. She liked the long word "unsatisfactory," because it gave her some comfort to say it. But she never finished her sentence, because just then a heavy crash shook the forest from end to end.

Part 7 — The Lion and the Unicorn

The heavy crash had hardly ended when soldiers came running through the wood. First they came in twos and threes. Then they came in groups of ten or twenty. At last they came in such large crowds that they seemed to fill the whole forest, and Alice quickly moved behind a tree.

Alice was afraid the soldiers would run over her. She watched them pass and thought she had never seen such poor soldiers in all her life. They kept falling over stones, roots, and one another. When one soldier fell, several more fell over him, until little heaps of soldiers lay all over the ground.

After the foot soldiers came the horses. Because they had four feet, they did a little better than the men. Still, even the horses often stumbled. Whenever a horse stumbled, the rider fell off at once, as if that were a rule of the country.

The noise and confusion grew worse every moment. Alice was very glad when she came out of the wood into an open place. There she saw the White King sitting on the ground. He was writing quickly in his large notebook, and he looked very

pleased with himself.

“I have sent them all!” cried the King when he saw Alice. “Did you meet any soldiers as you came through the wood?” Alice said she had met several thousand, she thought. The King looked in his notebook and said the exact number was four thousand two hundred and seven. He had not sent all the horses, because two of them were needed for the game.

The King also said he had not sent his two Messengers. They had both gone to the town. Then he asked Alice to look along the road and tell him if she could see either of them. Alice shaded her eyes with her hand and looked carefully. “I see nobody on the road,” she said.

“I wish I had eyes like that,” said the King in an unhappy voice. “You can see Nobody, and from such a long way too. I can hardly see real people in this light.” Alice did not answer, because she was still looking along the road. At last she cried, “Now I see somebody, but he is coming very slowly.”

The person on the road was moving in a very strange way. He jumped up and down, bent his body, and waved his large hands on both sides like fans. Alice thought he looked almost like an eel trying to dance. The King said there was nothing strange about it. He said the Messenger was making Anglo-Saxon movements because he was happy.

“His name is Haigha,” said the King. Alice began to play a word game in her head. “I love my love with an H because he is happy,” she said. “I hate him with an H because he is hideous. I fed him with ham sandwiches and hay. His name is Haigha, and he lives—” She stopped because she could not think of a town beginning with H.

“He lives on the hill,” said the King, not knowing that Alice was playing a game. Then he said the other Messenger was called Hatta. “I must have two Messengers,” he explained. “One to come and one to go.” Alice said softly that she did not understand. The King answered that he needed one to fetch and one to carry, as if that explained everything.

Just then Haigha arrived. He was too much out of breath to speak. He could only wave his hands and make terrible faces at the King. The King tried to make

him look at Alice instead. “This young lady loves you with an H,” he said. But Haigha only made stranger faces, and his eyes rolled wildly from side to side.

“You frighten me,” said the King. “I feel faint. Give me a ham sandwich.” Haigha opened a bag that hung round his neck and gave him a sandwich. The King ate it quickly and asked for another. Haigha looked into the bag and said there was nothing left but hay.

“Then hay,” said the King weakly. He ate some and soon felt better. “There is nothing like eating hay when one feels faint,” he told Alice. Alice said she thought cold water might be better. The King answered that he had not said nothing was better; he had only said nothing was like it.

Then the King asked Haigha whom he had passed on the road. “Nobody,” said Haigha. “Quite right,” said the King. “This young lady saw him too. So of course Nobody walks more slowly than you.” Haigha looked cross and said he did his best. He was sure nobody walked much faster than he did.

“He cannot do that,” said the King. “If he walked faster, he would have arrived before you.” Alice found this very confusing, but she did not try to explain it. The King then told Haigha to give his news from the town. Haigha said he would whisper it.

Alice leaned forward because she wanted to hear too. Haigha put his hands around his mouth like a trumpet and bent close to the King’s ear. But instead of whispering, he shouted as loudly as he could, “They are fighting again!” The poor King jumped up and shook himself as if the shout had gone through his head.

“Do you call that a whisper?” cried the King. “If you do that again, I will have you buttered.” Alice thought that if the shout was like an earthquake, it must have been a very small earthquake. Then she asked who was fighting. “The Lion and the Unicorn, of course,” said the King.

“Are they fighting for the crown?” Alice asked. “Yes,” said the King. “And the funniest part is that it is my crown all the time. Come, let us run and see them.” They set off at once, and Alice repeated an old rhyme to herself as she ran.

The Lion and the Unicorn

Were fighting for the crown.
The Lion beat the Unicorn
All around the town.

Some gave them white bread,
Some gave them brown.
Some gave them sweet plum cake,
And drummed them out of town.

“Does the one who wins get the crown?” Alice asked, though she was almost out of breath. The King said certainly not, and he seemed surprised by the idea. Alice asked if they could stop for a minute so she could breathe. The King said he was good enough to stop, but not strong enough, because a minute was too hard to stop.

Alice had no breath left to answer, so they ran on in silence. Soon they came to a great crowd. In the middle of it, the Lion and the Unicorn were fighting in a cloud of dust. At first Alice could not tell which was which. Then she saw the Unicorn’s horn and knew him at once.

Near them stood Hatta, the other Messenger. He was holding a cup of tea in one hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other. Haigha whispered to Alice that Hatta had only just come out of prison. He had been sent for before he could finish his tea, and in prison they had given him only oyster shells, so he was very hungry and thirsty.

Haigha put his arm kindly around Hatta’s neck and asked how he was. Hatta only nodded and kept eating. Haigha asked if he had been happy in prison. Hatta looked around again, and one or two tears ran down his face. Still he did not say a word, but went on with his bread and tea.

The King told Hatta to speak and asked how the fight was going. Hatta made a great effort and swallowed a large piece of bread and butter. “They are doing very well,” he said in a choking voice. “Each of them has fallen down about eighty-seven times.” Alice asked if the white bread and brown bread would come

soon, and Hatta said they were already there.

Just then the fight stopped for a rest. The Lion and the Unicorn sat down, breathing hard. The King called out, "Ten minutes for food!" At once Haigha and Hatta began to carry rough trays of white and brown bread around to everyone.

Alice took a piece of bread too. She thought the bread was dry, but she was glad to have something quiet to do. The Lion and the Unicorn sat near the King, still looking at each other as if the fight might begin again at any moment. The King tried to look calm, but his crown shook on his head.

The Unicorn saw Alice and stared at her in great surprise. He asked the King what she was. Haigha said they had found her that day. "She is as large as life," he said, "and twice as natural." The Unicorn said he had always thought such creatures were only in stories.

"Is it alive?" asked the Unicorn. Haigha answered very seriously that it could talk. The Unicorn looked at Alice and said, "Talk, child." Alice could not help smiling. "You know," she said, "I always thought Unicorns were only in stories too. I never saw a real one before."

"Well," said the Unicorn, "now we have seen each other. If you believe in me, I will believe in you. Is that a fair agreement?" Alice said yes, if he liked. The Unicorn then turned to the King and asked for the plum cake. He said he did not want any brown bread.

The King whispered quickly to Haigha to open the bag. Haigha first opened the wrong one, which was full of hay. Then he took out a large cake, a dish, and a cutting knife. Alice wondered how all those things had fitted in the bag. It seemed like a magic trick.

While this was happening, the Lion came to join them. He looked tired and sleepy, and his eyes were half shut. He looked at Alice and asked in a deep voice what she was. "Are you animal, plant, or stone?" he said, yawning between the words. Before Alice could answer, the Unicorn cried, "She is a story monster!"

"Then pass around the plum cake, Monster," said the Lion, lying down with his chin on his paws. He told the King and the Unicorn to sit down too, because there must be fair play with the cake. The poor King sat between the two great

creatures and looked very uncomfortable. His crown shook so much that Alice thought it might fall off.

The Unicorn looked at the crown and said they might have another fine fight for it now. The Lion said he would win easily. The Unicorn said he was not so sure. The Lion grew angry and said he had already beaten the Unicorn all around the town. The King quickly interrupted them, because he was afraid the fight would start again.

Alice sat on the bank of a little stream with the great dish on her knees. She tried hard to cut the cake, but it would not stay cut. Every time she made a slice, the pieces joined together again. "This is very annoying," she said, because she was now almost used to being called "Monster."

"You do not know how to manage Looking-Glass cakes," said the Unicorn. "Pass it around first and cut it afterward." This sounded like nonsense, but Alice obeyed. She carried the dish around, and as she did so, the cake divided itself into three pieces. When she returned with the empty dish, the Lion said, "Now cut it."

Alice sat down with the knife in her hand and did not know what to do. The Unicorn cried that it was not fair, because the Lion had twice as much as he did. The Lion answered that Alice had kept none for herself at least. Then he asked whether she liked plum cake.

Before Alice could answer, the drums began. She could not tell where the noise came from. The whole air seemed full of it, and it rang through her head until she could hardly hear anything else. In terror, she jumped up and sprang across the little stream.

As she crossed, she had just time to see the Lion and the Unicorn rise angrily from their feast. They looked very upset that the noise had interrupted them. Then Alice fell to her knees and pressed both hands over her ears. "If that does not drum them out of town," she thought, "nothing ever will."

Part 8 — The Knights and the Last Brook

After a while, the terrible noise of the drums slowly died away. Then

everything became completely silent. Alice lifted her head carefully and looked around. No one was there. For a moment she thought she must have dreamed the Lion, the Unicorn, the King, and the strange Messengers.

But the great dish was still lying at her feet. It was the same dish on which she had tried to cut the plum cake. “Then I was not dreaming after all,” Alice said to herself. “Unless we are all part of the same dream. I do hope it is my dream, and not the Red King’s dream. I do not like belonging to someone else’s dream.”

Just then she heard a loud cry. “Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!” A Knight in red armour came riding straight toward her, waving a large club. His horse stopped suddenly in front of Alice. “You are my prisoner!” cried the Red Knight, and at the same moment he fell off his horse.

Alice was startled, but she was more worried about the Knight than about herself. She watched anxiously while he climbed back onto the horse. As soon as he was in the saddle again, he began, “You are my—” But before he could finish, another voice cried, “Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!” Alice looked around quickly and saw a White Knight coming.

The White Knight rode up beside Alice and fell off his horse too. Then he climbed back up, and the two Knights sat facing each other in silence. Alice looked from one to the other and did not know what to say. At last the Red Knight said, “She is my prisoner.”

“Yes,” said the White Knight, “but I came and rescued her.” The Red Knight answered that they would have to fight for her. Both Knights put on their helmets. Then they began to hit each other with their clubs so hard that Alice quickly hid behind a tree.

Alice peeped out from behind the tree and tried to understand the rules of the battle. One rule seemed to be this: if one Knight hit the other, the other fell off his horse. Another rule seemed to be this: if one Knight missed, he fell off his own horse. The horses stood quietly through it all, as if they were used to this kind of fighting.

The Knights made a terrible noise every time they fell. Alice thought they sounded like a lot of metal things falling into a fireplace. At last both Knights fell

off at the same time, and both landed on their heads. Then they stood up, shook hands politely, and the Red Knight rode away.

“That was a wonderful victory, was it not?” said the White Knight, coming up to Alice and breathing hard. Alice was not sure what to say. “I do not know,” she answered. “I do not want to be anybody’s prisoner. I want to be a Queen.”

“And so you will be,” said the White Knight, “when you cross the next little stream. I will take you safely to the end of the wood. Then I must go back, because that is the end of my move.” Alice thanked him very much. Then she saw that he was having trouble with his helmet, so she helped shake him out of it.

When the helmet came off, the Knight pushed back his rough hair with both hands. He had a gentle face and large kind eyes. Alice thought he was the strangest soldier she had ever seen. His armour was made of tin, and it fitted him very badly.

A small wooden box was fastened across his shoulder, upside down, with its lid open. Alice looked at it curiously. The Knight smiled in a friendly way. “You are looking at my little box,” he said. “It is my own invention. I keep clothes and sandwiches in it. I carry it upside down, so the rain cannot get in.”

“But the things can fall out,” Alice said gently. “The lid is open.” The Knight looked upset for a moment. “Then all the things must have fallen out,” he said. “The box is no use without them.” He was just going to throw it away, but then he changed his mind and hung it carefully on a tree.

“Can you guess why I did that?” he asked. Alice shook her head. “I hope some bees will make a home in it,” said the Knight. “Then I shall get honey.” Alice noticed that he already had something like a beehive tied to the saddle. The Knight said it was a very good beehive, but no bees had come near it yet.

There was also a mouse trap on the horse. Alice asked why he needed one there. The Knight said mice were not very likely to come onto a horse’s back, but if they did, he did not want them running about. Then he showed Alice the things around the horse’s feet. They were there, he said, to protect the horse from shark bites.

Alice could not imagine sharks biting a horse in the wood. But the White Knight looked very serious, so she did not laugh. “It is best to be ready for

everything,” he said. Then he looked at the great dish on the ground and asked what it was for. Alice said it was for plum cake.

“Then we should take it with us,” said the Knight. “It may be useful if we find any plum cake.” Alice helped him put the dish into a bag. This took a long time, because the Knight kept falling into the bag himself. At last they got the dish inside, and he hung the bag on the saddle with many other strange things.

As they started walking, the Knight asked if Alice had fastened her hair well. Alice smiled and said it was fastened in the usual way. The Knight said that was not enough, because the wind was very strong there. “It is as strong as soup,” he said.

Alice asked if he had invented a way to keep hair from being blown off. The Knight said he had not done that yet, but he had invented a way to stop hair from falling off. His plan was to take a straight stick and make the hair climb up it like a tree. Things did not fall upward, he explained, so the hair would be safe.

This did not sound comfortable to Alice. For a few minutes they walked on without speaking. Alice had to stop again and again to help the poor Knight, because he was not a good rider. When the horse stopped, he fell forward. When the horse started, he fell backward. Sometimes he fell sideways too, usually on the side where Alice was walking.

After Alice helped him up for the fifth time, she said carefully, “I am afraid you have not had much practice in riding.” The Knight looked surprised and a little hurt. Alice explained that people with a lot of practice did not usually fall off so often. “I have had plenty of practice,” said the Knight very seriously. “Plenty of practice.”

A little later, the Knight began to explain the great art of riding. He raised one arm and said, “The great art is to keep—” But the sentence ended because he fell heavily onto his head in the path. Alice was very frightened this time and helped him up quickly. “I hope no bones are broken,” she said.

“None worth speaking of,” said the Knight. Then he tried to show Alice how to keep his balance. He let go of the horse and stretched out both arms. At once he fell flat on his back under the horse’s feet. “Plenty of practice,” he kept saying,

while Alice helped him stand again.

Alice lost patience for a moment. “This is too silly,” she cried. “You ought to ride a wooden horse on wheels.” The Knight became interested at once. He asked if that kind of horse moved smoothly. Alice said it moved much more smoothly than a live horse, and she could not help laughing. The Knight said he would get one, or perhaps several.

After a short silence, the Knight said he was very good at inventing things. He asked if Alice had noticed that he looked thoughtful the last time she picked him up. Alice said he had looked rather serious. The Knight said he had been inventing a new way to get over a gate.

He explained the plan. First, he would put his head on top of the gate. Then he would stand on his head. Then his feet would be high enough, and he would be over the gate. Alice said thoughtfully that he would be over it when the plan was finished, but it might be rather hard. The Knight said he had not tried it yet, so he could not be sure.

Alice quickly changed the subject and asked about his helmet. The Knight said he had invented a better one shaped like a sugar loaf. If he fell off his horse, the helmet touched the ground first, so he had only a very short way to fall. But once he fell into the helmet, and another White Knight put it on by mistake while he was still inside.

Alice did not dare to laugh, because the Knight looked very serious. He said it had taken hours to get him out. He raised his hands as he spoke, and at once he rolled out of the saddle and fell headfirst into a deep ditch. Alice ran to the ditch and was very glad to hear him still talking calmly from inside it.

She pulled him out by the feet and laid him on the bank. The Knight said his mind worked just as well when his body was upside down. In fact, he said, he invented more things that way. Then he told Alice about the cleverest thing he had ever invented: a new pudding during the meat course at dinner.

Alice asked if it had been ready for the next course. The Knight said no, not the next course. Then Alice asked if it had been ready the next day. The Knight sadly said no, not the next day either. In fact, he did not believe the pudding had

ever been cooked, or ever would be cooked, though it was a very clever pudding to invent.

Alice asked what it was made of, because she wanted to cheer him up. “It began with blotting paper,” said the Knight with a deep sigh. Alice said that did not sound very nice. The Knight answered eagerly that blotting paper alone was not nice, but it might be very different with gunpowder and sealing wax mixed in.

Just then they reached the end of the wood. The Knight said he had to leave her there. Alice looked puzzled, because she was still thinking about the pudding. The Knight thought she looked sad. “Let me sing you a song to comfort you,” he said.

Alice asked if it was very long, because she had already heard a great deal of poetry that day. The Knight said it was long, but very beautiful. He said it either brought tears to people’s eyes, or else it did not. Then he explained the name of the song in such a confusing way that Alice became completely lost.

First he said the name of the song was called “Haddocks’ Eyes.” Then he said the name really was “The Aged Aged Man.” Then he said the song was called “Ways and Means.” Finally he said the song really was “A-sitting on a Gate,” and the tune was his own invention. Alice listened as politely as she could.

The Knight stopped his horse and let the reins fall. He began to beat time slowly with one hand. His kind foolish face became gentle and bright. Alice leaned against a tree and watched him in the evening light, with the dark forest behind him and the quiet horse eating grass at her feet.

“The tune is not really his own invention,” Alice thought. But she listened carefully. She did not cry, though the Knight seemed to expect it. His song was strange and sad and funny all at once.

I will tell you all I can.

There is not much to tell.

I saw a very old, old man

Sitting by a gate so well.

“Who are you, old man?” I asked.
“And how do you live each day?”
His answer ran through my poor head
Like water running away.

He said, “I look for butterflies
Sleeping in the wheat.
I make them into little pies
And sell them in the street.

“I sell them to the sailor men
Who cross the stormy sea.
That is how I get my bread.
Please give a coin to me.”

But I was thinking of a plan
To paint my beard bright green,
And use a very large round fan,
So it could not be seen.

So I had no answer ready
To what the old man said.
“Tell me how you live!” I cried,
And tapped him on the head.

He answered in a gentle voice,
“I go upon my way.
When I find a mountain stream,
I set it burning bright as day.

“From that they make a kind of oil

For people's hair to shine.
Yet for all that heavy work,
They pay me one small coin."

But I was thinking of a way
To live on cake and batter,
And eat it every single day,
And grow a little fatter.

I shook him gently side to side,
Until his face looked blue.
"Please tell me how you live," I cried,
"And what it is you do."

He said, "I hunt for fish's eyes
Among the heather bright.
I turn them into buttons small
Through all the silent night.

"I do not sell them for much gold,
Or silver shining fine.
I sell them for one little coin,
And that will buy me nine.

"I sometimes dig for buttered rolls,
Or set small traps for crabs.
I sometimes search the grassy hills
For wheels from city cabs.

"And that," he said, and gave a wink,
"Is how I get my wealth.

And gladly, sir, I hope to drink
To your most noble health.”

I heard him then, for I had just
Finished my new design:
To keep a bridge from going brown
By boiling it in wine.

I thanked him for his story then,
And for his kindly health.
I thanked him most because he told
The way he got his wealth.

And now, if I put my hand in glue,
Or put wrong shoes on my feet,
Or drop a heavy thing on my toe,
And cry out in the street,

I think of that old man again,
With hair as white as snow,
Who sat beside the quiet gate
That evening long ago.

When the Knight finished the last words, he gathered up the reins and turned his horse back toward the forest road. He told Alice that she had only a few yards to go. She must go down the hill and cross the little stream. Then she would be a Queen.

Alice looked eagerly in the direction he pointed. But the Knight asked her to wait and see him off first. He said it would encourage him if she waved her handkerchief when he reached the turn in the road. Alice said of course she would wait, and she thanked him for coming so far with her and for singing the song.

The Knight looked doubtful. He said he hoped she had liked the song, though she had not cried as much as he expected. Then they shook hands. The Knight rode slowly away into the forest, and Alice stood watching him with a warm, quiet feeling.

“It will not take long to see him off,” Alice said to herself. Then the Knight fell on his head as usual. He got on again rather easily, because so many things were hanging around the horse. Alice watched him go on, falling first on one side and then on the other. After the fourth or fifth fall, he reached the turn in the road.

Alice waved her handkerchief. She waited until the White Knight was completely out of sight. “I hope that encouraged him,” she said softly. Then she turned and ran down the hill toward the last little stream. “Now for the Eighth Square,” she cried, “and now to be a Queen!”

A few steps brought her to the edge of the stream. Alice jumped over it with a light bound. In the next moment, she found herself lying on a soft green lawn. Little flower beds were dotted here and there, and everything felt quiet and fresh.

“Oh, how glad I am to be here!” Alice cried. Then she suddenly put her hands to her head. Something heavy and tight was there. She pulled it off carefully and set it on her lap. It was a golden crown.

Part 9 — Queen Alice and the Two Queens

Alice looked at the golden crown on her lap. Then she put it back on her head very carefully. “Well, this is grand,” she said. “I did not expect to become a Queen so soon.” Then she spoke to herself in a firm voice, because she was rather fond of scolding herself. “Your Majesty, it will never do to lie about on the grass like that. Queens must look proper.”

So Alice stood up and walked about on the soft lawn. At first she moved very stiffly, because she was afraid the crown might fall off. Then she remembered that no one was there to see her. “And if I really am a Queen,” she said as she sat down again, “I shall learn how to manage it in time.”

Things in Looking-Glass world were always so strange that Alice was not very

surprised to find the Red Queen and the White Queen sitting close beside her. One Queen sat on her right, and the other sat on her left. Alice wanted very much to ask how they had come there. But she thought it might not be polite, so she asked a different question instead.

“Please, can you tell me if the game is over?” Alice began, looking shyly at the Red Queen. “Speak when you are spoken to,” said the Red Queen sharply. Alice thought this rule was not sensible. If everyone waited for someone else to speak first, then no one would ever say anything.

The Red Queen called this idea foolish. Then she suddenly changed the subject and asked what Alice meant by saying she really was a Queen. “You cannot be a Queen,” she said, “until you have passed the proper examination. The sooner we begin, the better.” Alice said she had only said “if,” but that did not help her at all.

The two Queens looked at each other as if Alice had said something terrible. The Red Queen said Alice must always speak the truth, think before speaking, and write things down afterward. Alice began to say that she had not meant anything wrong. But the Red Queen stopped her at once and said that was exactly the problem: a child ought to mean something.

“Even a joke should have some meaning,” said the Red Queen. “And surely a child is more important than a joke.” Alice said she did not deny that. The Red Queen said Alice could not deny it, even if she tried with both hands. Alice answered that she did not deny things with her hands, and this made the talk even more confused.

The White Queen said Alice seemed to want to deny something, but did not know what. The Red Queen said this showed a bad temper. After that, there was an uncomfortable silence. Alice sat very still between the two Queens and wished the examination would either begin properly or not begin at all.

At last the Red Queen turned to the White Queen and said, “I invite you to Alice’s dinner party this afternoon.” The White Queen smiled weakly and said, “And I invite you.” Alice was surprised. “I did not know I was going to have a party,” she said. “If it is my party, I think I should invite the guests.”

The Red Queen said Alice had been given the chance to invite them, but had

not used it. Then she suggested that Alice had not had many lessons in manners. Alice said manners were not taught in lessons. Lessons taught sums and things like that. This was a very dangerous thing to say, because it gave the Queens a new subject.

“Can you do addition?” asked the White Queen. “What is one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?” Alice tried to count them in her head, but there were too many ones. “I do not know,” she said at last. “I lost count.”

“She cannot do addition,” said the Red Queen. “Can you do subtraction? Take nine from eight.” Alice answered that she could not take nine from eight. Then the White Queen asked if she could do division. “Divide a loaf by a knife,” she said. “What is the answer?”

Alice was just beginning to think when the Red Queen answered for her. “Bread and butter, of course,” she said. Then she gave Alice another question. “Take a bone from a dog. What remains?” Alice thought carefully. If she took the bone, the bone would not remain. The dog would follow her and bite her, so the dog would not remain either. And Alice herself would not remain, because she would run away.

The Red Queen asked if nothing would remain. Alice said perhaps nothing would. But the Queen said the dog’s temper would remain, because the dog would lose it. Alice tried to answer seriously and said the dog and its temper might go different ways. But in her mind she thought, “What terrible nonsense we are talking.”

“She cannot do sums at all,” said both Queens together. Alice was tired of being judged, so she turned to the White Queen and asked, “Can you do sums?” The White Queen gasped and shut her eyes. She said she could do addition if she had enough time, but she could not do subtraction under any circumstances.

The Red Queen then asked if Alice knew her A B C. Alice said of course she did. The White Queen whispered that she knew it too, and that she could even read words of one letter. She told Alice not to lose hope, because Alice might learn to do the same in time. Alice did not answer, because this was not encouraging at

all.

Then the Red Queen asked a useful question. “How is bread made?” Alice was glad, because she thought she knew this. “You take some flour,” she began. But the White Queen asked where one picked the flower, in a garden or in the hedges. Alice explained that this kind of flour was not picked; it was ground.

“How many acres of ground?” asked the White Queen. “You must not leave out so much.” The Red Queen suddenly cried, “Fan her head! She will be ill after so much thinking.” Both Queens began to fan Alice with bunches of leaves. The wind blew her hair about so much that she had to beg them to stop.

When they stopped, the Red Queen said Alice was all right again. Then she asked about languages. “What is the French for fiddle-de-dee?” Alice said that “fiddle-de-dee” was not English. “Who said it was?” asked the Red Queen. Alice thought she had found a clever answer and said, “Tell me what language it is, and I will tell you the French.” But the Red Queen stood up stiffly and said Queens never made bargains.

Alice wished that Queens never asked questions. The White Queen, looking anxious, tried to keep peace between them. She asked what caused lightning. Alice answered too quickly and said thunder caused lightning. Then she corrected herself and said she meant it the other way round.

“Too late,” said the Red Queen. “Once you have said a thing, it is fixed, and you must take the result.” The White Queen said this reminded her of a terrible storm last Tuesday, or perhaps one of the last set of Tuesdays. Alice said that in her country there was only one day at a time. The Red Queen said this was a poor thin way to do things.

The White Queen went on with her story. Part of the roof had come off, she said, and a great deal of thunder had got into the room. It had rolled around in large pieces and knocked over tables and other things. She had been so frightened that she could not remember her own name. Alice privately thought that remembering one’s name in an accident would not be very useful, but she did not say so.

The Red Queen took the White Queen’s hand and stroked it gently. She told

Alice to excuse her, because the White Queen meant well, though she often said foolish things. Then she said the White Queen had never been properly brought up, but was very good-tempered. She suggested that Alice should pat her on the head and see how pleased she would be. Alice did not feel brave enough to do that.

“A little kindness would do wonders with her,” said the Red Queen. The White Queen gave a deep sigh and laid her head on Alice’s shoulder. “I am so sleepy,” she moaned. The Red Queen said the poor thing was tired. She told Alice to smooth the White Queen’s hair, lend her a nightcap, and sing her a soft sleeping song.

Alice said she had no nightcap with her and did not know any soft sleeping songs. “Then I must do it myself,” said the Red Queen. She began to sing in a quiet voice.

Sleep, dear Queen, on Alice’s lap,
The feast is not yet here.
When the feast is over, we
Shall dance with royal cheer.

Red Queen, White Queen, Alice too,
We all shall go away.
Sleep a little, rest a little,
Until the feast today.

“Now you know the words,” said the Red Queen. She put her own head down on Alice’s other shoulder and told Alice to sing it to her, because she was getting sleepy too. In another moment both Queens were asleep. They snored loudly, one on each side of Alice.

“What am I to do?” Alice cried, looking around in great confusion. First one round head, and then the other, slipped from her shoulders and lay heavily in her lap. She did not think anyone had ever had to take care of two sleeping Queens at

the same time. In the history of England, she thought, it could not have happened, because there was usually only one Queen at a time.

“Wake up, you heavy things,” Alice said impatiently. But the only answer was soft snoring. The snoring became clearer and clearer until it almost sounded like a song. Alice listened so carefully that she hardly noticed when the two great heads disappeared from her lap.

Suddenly she was standing before an arched doorway. Over the doorway, large letters said “QUEEN ALICE.” On one side was a bell marked “Visitors’ Bell.” On the other side was a bell marked “Servants’ Bell.” Alice looked from one bell to the other and did not know which one she ought to ring.

“I am not a visitor,” she said. “And I am not a servant. There should be a bell marked ‘Queen.’” Just then the door opened a little, and a creature with a long beak put its head out. “No one may come in until the week after next,” it said. Then it shut the door with a loud bang.

Alice knocked and rang for a long time, but no one opened the door. At last a very old Frog got up from under a tree and came slowly toward her. He was dressed in bright yellow and wore enormous boots. “What is it now?” he said in a deep rough whisper.

Alice turned to him, ready to complain. “Where is the servant whose job it is to answer the door?” she asked. “Which door?” said the Frog. Alice almost stamped her foot. “This door, of course,” she said. The Frog looked at the door for a long time, then rubbed it with his thumb, as if he were testing the paint.

“Answer the door?” said the Frog. “What has the door been asking?” Alice said she did not know what he meant. The Frog said he was speaking English and asked if she was deaf. Alice answered impatiently that the door had asked nothing. She had only been knocking at it.

“You should not do that,” said the Frog. “It makes the door angry.” Then he went up to the door and gave it a strong kick with one huge foot. “Leave it alone, and it will leave you alone,” he said. After saying this, he slowly went back to his tree.

At that moment the door flew open, and a sharp voice began to sing.

Alice said to Looking-Glass land,
“I have a crown upon my head.
I hold a royal stick in hand.
Come to my feast,” Queen Alice said.

“Come, all creatures, great and small.
Come here quickly, come and see.
Dine with the Red Queen and White Queen,
And sit at table here with me.”

Then hundreds of voices joined in the chorus.

Fill the glasses, quick, quick, quick,
Put strange food on every plate.
Cats in coffee, mice in tea,
Welcome Alice, good and great.

Buttons, bran, and many things,
Spread them on the table free.
Welcome now our new young Queen,
Welcome her with thirty times three.

A confused sound of cheering followed. Alice thought to herself that thirty times three made ninety, and she wondered if anyone was counting. Then there was silence again, and the same sharp voice began another verse. The words made Alice feel rather uncomfortable, because they sounded much too proud for her.

“Come near, creatures, come and hear,
Queen Alice lets you see her face.
It is a very special thing

To sit with her in this high place.”

“Come to dinner, come to tea,
With Red and White beside her throne.
It is a great and happy day
To eat with Alice as your own.”

Then the chorus came again.

Fill the glasses, dark and sweet,
Mix the drink with sand and ink.
Wool in wine and dust in tea,
Give them anything to drink.

Cheer for Alice, loud and fine,
Let the voices rise and shine.
Welcome now our new young Queen,
Welcome her with ninety times nine.

“Ninety times nine!” cried Alice in despair. “That will never be finished. I had better go in at once.” She stepped through the open door. The moment she appeared, all the voices stopped, and the great hall became completely silent.

Part 10 — The Feast Breaks Apart

Alice walked slowly into the great hall. She looked along the long table as she went. There were about fifty guests sitting there. Some were animals, some were birds, and there were even a few flowers among them.

“I am glad they came without waiting to be invited,” Alice thought. “I would never have known which people were the right ones to ask.” At the head of the table there were three chairs. The Red Queen sat in one, and the White Queen sat

in another. The chair in the middle was empty, so Alice sat there.

She felt very uncomfortable. Everyone was looking at her, and no one said a word. Alice wished that somebody would begin talking, even if it was only to ask another foolish question. At last the Red Queen spoke, and her voice sounded very grand and cold.

“You have missed the soup and the fish,” said the Red Queen. “Bring in the meat.” At once the waiters placed a large leg of mutton in front of Alice. It looked very hot and very serious. Alice picked up the knife and fork, because she thought she was expected to serve it.

“You look a little shy,” said the Red Queen. “Let me introduce you to the mutton. Alice, this is Mutton. Mutton, this is Alice.” The leg of mutton stood up in the dish and made a little bow to Alice. Alice made a small bow back, feeling more confused than ever.

“May I give you some?” Alice asked, taking up the knife. The Red Queen looked shocked. “Certainly not,” she said. “It is not polite to cut anyone after you have been introduced.” Then she called, “Take away the meat.” The waiters carried it away so quickly that Alice hardly had time to look at it again.

After that, the waiters brought in a large pudding. Alice hoped this would be easier to manage. But the Red Queen said, “Pudding, this is Alice. Alice, this is Pudding. Take away the pudding.” The waiters took it away so fast that Alice could not even return its bow.

Alice did not see why the Red Queen should be the only person to give orders. She decided to try giving an order herself. “Waiter,” she called, “bring back the pudding.” At once the pudding came back, as if by magic. It was so large that Alice felt shy again, just as she had felt with the mutton.

Still, Alice made herself brave. She cut a slice of the pudding and handed it to the Red Queen. “How rude!” cried the Pudding in a thick heavy voice. “How would you like it if I cut a slice out of you?” Alice was so surprised that she could not answer. She could only sit still and stare at it.

“Say something,” said the Red Queen. “It is silly to leave all the talking to the pudding.” Alice felt frightened, because the whole table became silent as soon as

she opened her mouth. Every eye turned toward her. Still, she tried to speak as clearly as she could.

“I have heard a great deal of poetry today,” Alice began. “And it is strange, because every poem had something to do with fish. Do people in this country like fish very much?” She spoke to the Red Queen, but the Red Queen did not answer the question directly.

“About fish,” said the Red Queen slowly, putting her mouth close to Alice’s ear, “the White Queen knows a lovely riddle. It is all in verse, and it is all about fish. Shall she say it?” The White Queen leaned close to Alice’s other ear and murmured that it would be a great pleasure. Alice said politely, “Please do.”

The White Queen smiled with delight and touched Alice’s cheek. Then she began her riddle in a soft singing voice.

First the fish must be caught,
That is easy to do.
A baby could catch it,
If the fish waited too.

Next the fish must be bought,
That is easy as well.
One small coin could buy it,
If someone would sell.

Now cook me the fish,
That will not take long.
Put it into a dish,
And you cannot go wrong.

Bring the dish to the table,
Let me eat it up.
Lift the cover quickly,

So that I may sup.

But the cover holds tight,

Like glue on the dish.

Which is harder to do:

Uncover the riddle, or uncover the fish?

“Take a minute to think,” said the Red Queen, “and then guess the answer.” Alice did not know what answer there could be. The riddle seemed to have no door into it and no door out of it. She looked at the White Queen, but the White Queen only smiled as if everything were perfectly clear.

Before Alice could think of anything, the Red Queen stood up and cried, “Now we shall drink to Queen Alice’s health.” All the guests began to drink at once. But they drank in very strange ways. Some put their glasses upside down on their heads and drank whatever ran down their faces.

Others knocked over the bottles and drank from the streams that ran across the table. Three guests who looked like kangaroos climbed into a large dish and began drinking the gravy. Alice thought they looked very rude, but she remembered that almost everything at this dinner was rude already. She kept both hands in her lap and tried not to look too shocked.

“You should give thanks in a neat speech,” said the Red Queen, frowning at Alice. Alice rose obediently, though she felt nervous. The White Queen whispered, “We must support you, you know.” Alice whispered back that she could manage quite well without support.

But the Red Queen said that would not be proper. So the two Queens stood close beside Alice, one on each side. They pushed against her so hard that she could hardly stay in her place. Alice felt as if they were trying to make her flat.

“I rise to give thanks,” Alice began. And she really did rise as she spoke. The Queens pushed her upward several inches from the floor. Alice caught the edge of the table with both hands and pulled herself down again. She tried to look calm, but it was very difficult to make a speech while being lifted into the air.

“Take care!” screamed the White Queen, catching Alice’s hair with both hands. “Something is going to happen.” Then all kinds of things happened at once. The candles grew taller and taller until they reached the ceiling. Their flames shone at the top like little fireworks.

The bottles each took two plates and used them as wings. Then they fitted forks under themselves like legs and began flying about the room. Alice thought they looked very much like birds, though she could hardly think clearly in all the noise and movement. Plates, glasses, spoons, and guests seemed to be going in every direction.

Then Alice heard a rough laugh beside her. She turned to see what had happened to the White Queen. But the White Queen was no longer in the chair. Instead, the leg of mutton was sitting there, looking as if it belonged at the table as much as anyone else.

“Here I am!” cried a voice from the soup bowl. Alice turned quickly and saw the White Queen’s broad kind face looking over the edge. For one moment the Queen grinned at her. Then she sank down into the soup and disappeared.

By this time the feast had become impossible. Several guests were lying down in the dishes. The soup spoon was walking up the table toward Alice’s chair and waving at her to move out of its way. The pudding looked offended, the bottles flew like birds, and the candles burned high above everyone’s head.

“I cannot stand this any longer!” cried Alice. She jumped up and seized the tablecloth with both hands. Then she gave it one strong pull. Plates, dishes, candles, food, and guests all came crashing down together in one great heap on the floor.

“And as for you,” Alice cried, turning angrily toward the Red Queen. She felt sure the Red Queen was the cause of all the trouble. But the Red Queen was no longer sitting beside her. She had become as small as a doll and was running round and round on the table after her own shawl.

At any other time, Alice would have been very surprised. But now she was too excited to be surprised at anything. “As for you,” she repeated. The little Red Queen jumped over a bottle that had just landed on the table, but Alice caught her

in both hands.

The small Queen struggled, but Alice held her tightly. The whole hall still seemed to be shaking with noise and broken things. Alice looked down at the tiny creature in her hands and spoke in a fierce voice. “I will shake you into a kitten,” she cried. “I really will!”

Part 11 — Shaking and Waking

Alice lifted the little Red Queen from the table as she spoke. She was still angry, and her hands held the tiny Queen very firmly. The feast had been wild, loud, and foolish, and Alice felt that someone must be made to answer for it. The Red Queen had ordered people about all day, and now Alice was the one with power.

She shook the Queen backward and forward with all her might. “I will shake you into a kitten,” she said again. The small Queen did not fight back. She did not scream, and she did not give any sharp royal orders. She only looked up at Alice with a strange little face.

Then the Queen began to change. Her face grew smaller and smaller. Her eyes grew larger, rounder, and greener. Alice kept shaking her, but now it no longer felt as if she were holding a Queen. The little body in her hands was becoming shorter, fatter, and softer.

The red dress seemed to lose its shape. The stiff little arms and legs were no longer stiff. The sharp proud face became round and gentle. Alice stared in wonder, but she did not stop shaking. Everything in the room seemed to be turning, fading, and drawing away from her.

The great hall, the long table, the broken dishes, the flying bottles, and the strange guests all became less clear. They were still there for a moment, but only like things seen through thick glass. The noise grew far away too. It was no longer the noise of a feast breaking apart, but a small soft sound close to Alice’s hands.

Alice looked down again. The Red Queen was no longer a Queen at all. She was not even like a little doll now. She was warm, soft, round, and alive in quite

another way. Her green eyes blinked, and her small body moved in Alice's hands.

Then the last piece of the Looking-Glass world slipped away. Alice was not in the great hall. She was not standing among queens, guests, dishes, and candles. She was back in the quiet room, with the fire, the chair, the chess pieces, and the soft winter light. The strange little creature in her hands was really a kitten after all.

Alice held the kitten close and blinked, still half inside the dream. The royal anger had gone out of her, and the room felt wonderfully ordinary. The kitten purred as if nothing strange had happened. Alice was awake.

Part 12 — Which Dreamed It?

“Your Red Majesty should not purr so loudly,” Alice said, rubbing her eyes. She spoke to the black kitten with great respect, but also with a little severity. “You woke me from such a wonderful dream. And you were with me, Kitty. You were with me all through Looking-Glass world. Did you know that, dear?”

Kitty only purred. Alice thought this was a very inconvenient habit in kittens. Whatever one said to them, they purred. “If only you would purr for yes and mew for no,” Alice said, “or follow some rule like that, then a person could have a proper conversation with you. But how can I talk with you if you always say the same thing?”

The kitten only purred again, and Alice decided that this must mean yes. “Come, Kitty,” she said, “you were the Red Queen. I am quite sure of it.” She looked at the little black face and remembered the small angry Queen in her hands. “And when I shook you, you turned back into a kitten. That proves it, I think.”

Kitty began to wash one paw. Alice watched her very seriously. “Now, listen,” she said. “I shall tell you all about it, because you were there and ought to remember. First, I went through the looking-glass. Then I saw the chess pieces walking about. Then I read the strange poem in the mirror book. After that I went out into the garden.”

Kitty kept washing herself, as if this story were not surprising at all. Alice went

on, half to the kitten and half to herself. “The flowers talked, but they were not very kind. Then the Red Queen came, and she made me run as fast as I could, just to stay in the same place. I became a Pawn, and I had to cross all the squares.”

Alice leaned back in the chair and thought about the long dream. It already felt both close and far away. “There was the train,” she said softly, “and the Gnat, and the wood where I forgot my name. I liked the Fawn very much, until it remembered I was a human child and ran away from me.”

Kitty looked up for a moment, then went back to her paw. Alice nodded as if the kitten had asked for more. “Then I met Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They showed me the sleeping Red King and said I was only a thing in his dream. That was a very uncomfortable idea, Kitty. I did not like it at all.”

Alice was quiet for a little while. The fire made a soft sound in the room. The snow still lay outside, but inside everything was warm and calm. It was strange to think that only a short time ago, she had been in forests, shops, boats, halls, and a whole chessboard country.

“Then there was the White Queen,” Alice continued. “Perhaps she was Snowdrop. I must ask Snowdrop about that when Dinah has finished with her. The White Queen turned into a Sheep, and the Sheep kept a shop. Then came the river and the rushes, and after that the egg became Humpty Dumpty.”

Alice shook her head a little at the memory of him. “He was very clever, or at least he thought he was. He said words meant just what he chose them to mean. I do not think that is fair to words, Kitty. Words should not have to work so hard, even if he pays them extra.”

The kitten stopped washing and looked at Alice with bright eyes. Alice took this as a sign of interest. “Then came the Lion and the Unicorn,” she said. “They fought for the crown, though the crown belonged to the White King already. And they called me a monster. I did not like that, but they had never seen a child before, so perhaps I should forgive them.”

She stroked Kitty gently between the ears. “The White Knight was the kindest of all,” she said. “He kept falling off his horse, but he was very good to me. He took me to the last brook and sang me a song. I think I shall remember him longer

than many of the others.”

Alice looked down at Kitty and smiled. “Then I became Queen Alice. That was not as pleasant as I expected. The two Queens asked me hard and silly questions. They fell asleep on me. Then I went to my own feast, and everything became worse and worse. At last I pulled the tablecloth and caught the Red Queen.”

Kitty gave a small sound that was almost a mew. Alice sat up at once. “Ah, now you are beginning to answer,” she said. “So you admit that you were the Red Queen.” But Kitty only stretched herself and curled up again. Alice sighed, but she was not truly cross.

“Now, Kitty, we must consider a serious question,” she said. “Who dreamed it all?” Kitty began to lick her paw again. “No, no,” said Alice. “This is much more important than your paw. You should pay attention. It must have been either me or the Red King.”

Alice looked into the fire and thought hard. “The Red King was part of my dream,” she said slowly. “That seems clear. But Tweedledum and Tweedledee said I was part of his dream. If he woke up, they said, I would go out like a candle. That was very rude of them, but perhaps they were not completely wrong.”

The room was quiet except for the fire and Kitty’s soft purring. Alice tried to imagine the Red King still sleeping somewhere in the Looking-Glass wood. Perhaps he was still lying on the grass in his red nightcap. Perhaps he was still dreaming of Alice, the Queens, the Knight, the flowers, and the whole strange country.

“Was it the Red King, Kitty?” Alice asked. “You were his wife, my dear, so you ought to know.” The kitten took no notice of this important point. She only changed paws and began washing the other one. Alice laughed a little, because the kitten looked so serious about such an unimportant thing.

“Oh, Kitty, please help me decide,” Alice said. “Your paw can wait.” But Kitty would not help. She pretended not to hear, and she went on washing herself with great care. Alice had to leave the question open, though she did not like doing so.

So the question remained. Did Alice dream the Red King, or did the Red King dream Alice? Perhaps, in a dream, both things can feel true at once. Perhaps that

is why dreams are so strange and so hard to explain when one wakes.

Alice sat by the fire with the black kitten in her lap. The mirror shone quietly across the room. It looked like ordinary glass again. But Alice could not help wondering what might still be happening on the other side, beyond the silver surface.

And perhaps the story itself was like a dream too. It had begun softly, had moved through many strange places, and had come back again to the warm room. Alice could remember it, but not in the same way that she remembered ordinary things. It was bright and broken and beautiful, like light on moving water.

A boat goes under a sunny sky,
Slowly, softly, floating by.
One bright evening, warm and still,
It moves with dreams and quiet will.

Three children sit close side by side,
Eyes open wide upon the tide.
They listen well, with happy hearts,
As the simple story starts.

Long ago that sunlight passed.
Summer days could never last.
Autumn came with cold and rain,
And called the bright days back in vain.

Still, in dreams, Alice goes
Where no waking person knows.
Under skies we never see,
She walks again, light and free.

Children still will come to hear,

With willing heart and eager ear.
They will sit close, side by side,
And dream beside the moving tide.

In Wonderland they softly lie,
Dreaming while the days go by.
Dreaming while the summers stream,
Life itself may be a dream.