



Alice in Wonderland

by Robert Marlowe

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"ALICE IN WONDERLAND"

BY

ROBERT MARLOWE

**FREELY ADAPTED INTO A PANTOMIME FORMAT
FROM THE ORIGINAL BY LEWIS CARROLL.**

CHARACTERS

Alice

The White Rabbit

Dum and Dee – The Tweedle Brothers

The Mad Hatter

The March Hare

The Duchess

The Cook

Sleepy the Dormouse

The Queen of Hearts

The King of Hearts

The Knave of Hearts

The Cheshire Cat - (A voice Off role)

The Hookah Smoking Caterpillar

Chorus of Assorted Animals – Soldiers – Playing Cards

SCENES

Scene 1	A River Bank on a Summer Afternoon	Front Cloth Prologue
Scene 2	Down the Rabbit Hole	Transformation in Blackout to
Scene 3	In Wonderland	Full Set
Scene 4	The Abode of the Caterpillar	Front Cloth
Scene 5	The Duchess's Kitchen	Full Set
Scene 6	Home of the Cheshire Cat	Front Cloth
Scene 7	The Mad Hatters Tea Party	Full Set
<i>Interval</i>		
Scene 8	The Queen of Hearts Garden Party	Full Set
Scene 9	Home of the Cheshire Cat again	Front Cloth
Scene 10	The Courtroom	Full Set
Scene 11	The River Bank Again	Front Cloth
Scene 12	Invitation to a Reunion Party	Full Set – Can be a repeat.

Notes on Characters for Casting

Alice:	Young – Essential as <u>playing</u> age should be around 10 years. However a teenager with singing ability is also necessary for experience.
White Rabbit:	Needs to be comedically experienced with easy style 20/30-age range. Singing and movement experience needed.
Dum and Dee The Tweedle Brothers:	Playing ages 20/30. These characters must be padded outrageously Fat as schoolboys. Laughing joyous characters with strong comic ability.
Mad Hatter:	Any Age. Needs to be tall and slim. Eccentric approach needed.
March Hare:	Could be Male or Female. Another eccentric) Both only) Small parts
Dormouse:	Must be small. Possibly a child-either sex) but essential.
The Duchess:	Preferably played by a male actor. Any age. This role is the evil character. Needs the experience to get the Audience to hate him. Also comedic.
The Cook:	Mature actress. Not a sympathetic role – in league with Duchess.
King of Hearts:	Mature Actor – Slightly browbeaten by his wife, but still tries to be in control.
Queen of Hearts:	Semi-mature actress. Dominant. Can be glamorous but hard in contrast to Duchess who is her sparring partner throughout.
Knave of Hearts:	Youngish male role – bright and likable.
Caterpillar:	Any age or sex – fairly small role but important.
Cheshire Cat:	Non appearance role – but needs good clear speaking voice.
Ace of Hearts:	Suitable for a chorus member capable of lines.

COSTUMES

As this subject is hardly ever performed as a Pantomime it needs an experienced costume department with ingenuity to create what is required.

Costumes can easily be copied from the various illustrations in the original book.

- Alice -** One costume throughout – sky blue/white. If necessary – a blonde straight haired wig held back behind an “Alice band” ribbon. Almost shoulder length to complete the usual view of what she looked like.
- White Rabbit -** Half mask with ears attached preferable, as he needs vocal freedom lipwise. Short tailcoat try for furry trousers (white of course), waistcoat with pocket for his mobile phone. Needs to look dapperish and smart.
- March Hare:** Brown and furry effect required. Waistcoat and bow tie for eccentricity. Half mask and ears.
- Dormouse:** Small and soft brownish furry effect costume half mask with tiny ears. Floppy bow at neck – Vision needed so Eyeholes important.
- Mad Hatter:** A Human character. Tennials original drawings illustrate perfectly this style of dress needed. Frock or Tail coat with check waistcoat. Floppy tie. Watch and chain. Most important – top hat tall with very visable price tag marked 10/6 (old money).
- King, Queen, And Knave of Hearts** All of these characters need to look like the playing cards. With red hearts prominent – Fortunately same costume throughout
- Duchess:** Is the evil character – colours, black mainly with touches of purple and emerald for relief – two tone headdress. Again same costume throughout.
- Caterpillar:** Blue catsuit – snood head cover in blue with attenae – blue makeup
- Cook:** Victorian costume with large mopcap.

Chorus Costumes:

Flower Fairies: A mixture of colours and styles is preferable – Imagination can go riot.

Playing Cards: Red tights and leotards with playing card tabbards. Hair covered with scarlet snood or beret acceptable.

Animals: As long as masks denote the animal costumes can be human with furry legs. Gloves important – Furry!
N.B. Animal masks are now easily available quite cheaply from Joke and Costume suppliers. Eyes and mouths easily made larger with careful cutting.

At first this subject looks quite daunting but requires far less than most pantomimes. However it's essential to retain public's usual remembrance of Alice in Wonderland.

Notes on Scenery

At first "Alice" may appear impossible to stage. However simplicity could be an advantage. The original tennial illustrations were black and white etchings and this can be most effective providing the costume department deliver strong coloured costumes, which is the requirement:

Writers Note

I directed a Professional Production of Alice in Wonderland a few years ago so there are possibly sets available for hire. However, I will detail below scene by scene the minimal necessary to present "Alice" in venues limited in acting areas and facilities.

All sets Black and White etching style

- Scene 1** **Countryside – A River bank**
A free standing tree under which Alice is first discovered asleep.

(N.B. This tree can be utilised in later scenes).
- Scene 2** **Down the Rabbit Hole – (Done in a blackout)**
- Scene 3** **Wonderland.**
If painting your own set – imagination can go overboard.
Quaint village with lopsided cottages etc.
- Scene 4** **Abode of Caterpillar**
Woodland etching which can suffice as backdrop for other frontcloths. This set does need a large mushroom separate from backcloth with ability for caterpillar to stand behind but appear as though he's on top (i.e. small ladder)
- Scene 5** **The Duchess's Kitchen**
Grand but rundown flagstones sketch with range either painted or free standing over which cook presides.

Props: A Rocking chair for Duchess

Scene 6**Home of Cheshire Cat**

This requires a special effect very important for a magic moment. This could be a backdrop repeat of Scene 4. Without the mushroom of course. A free standing tree – again could be the tree used for Scene 1 (*set on other side of stage*).

Tree has to have the ability for leaves to part and reveal only the head of the Cheshire Cat. Finally as Cat disappears for leaves to move back. If a header of leaves can be raised and lowered then it resolves the problem. As the Tree is free standing it could hide a secret person behind to work the cats mouth when it speaks. Failing that a small flickering spotlight, which flutters when cat speaks, is a simpler solution. The desired whole effect is that the Cheshire Cat appears and disappears at will to confuse Alice. (*This set is used in second half also*).

Scene 7**The Mad Hatter Tea Party**

Could use a woodland setting from a previous scene or if you wish for a different set, and have the funds this could be a garden with the Mad Hatters cottage as the backdrop. Props are very important in this scene. A long table dominates laid up with a dozen places. A bench behind table will suffice with a rather ornate chair placed at each end, when the characters change place the only one to benefit is the Hatter who has a full plate before him.

Scene 8**The Queen of Hearts Garden Party**

This needs to represent a rather grand palace garden evoking terraces and statuary. A practical urn is centre stage with a white Rose Tree in it dominating; Roses need to be of White Tissue paper because the story needs the roses to be painted red. Must use Red water colour for expediency during performance?

Scene 9**The home of the Cheshire Cat – Again**

Exactly set as Scene 6

Scene 10**The Courtroom**

Lavish or simple – The choice is yours. Could be backed with high windows before which stands ornate dais on which stand two thrones right of stage is the dock on the left is the jury box. This is formed of a front with hinged sides, which conceals same bench as used for Hatters Tea Party. Have 6 jury cards sit while 6 others stand behind. Thus you will

achieve the tiered effect but also enables a fast transformation when chaos reigns at the end of the scene. Suspended above the throne should be playing cards which should be capable of being raised and lowered continually until blackout happens to finish scene. They are stationary throughout the scene of course only giving the visual effect of collapsing at the finish.

Scene 11 This could be performed as a repeat scenically of scene one. If so it must be lit mysteriously for the ghost sequence in the beginning with a lighting change happening for the final scene between White Rabbit and Alice.

Scene 12 Could again save costs by repeating the Queens Garden Party Set (*without the rose urn*) especially if you've been able to create a terrace with steps down which is always favorite for a finale.

I trust these suggestions will be helpful in creating the magic needed for pantomime whether on a tight budget or expense no object scenario.

Memo to Musical Director

All music is suggested as appropriate for the situation. However it's only a suggestion and can be varied as required for capability of performers.

Memo for Stage Management

Keep props only to what is necessary and appropriate. Remember what goes on has to be got off. Probably in a blackout and faster than the set up. Minimalist is favourite.

Alice in Wonderland – Act One

Scene One

The Prologue: -

A river bank on a summer afternoon. Alice is sitting under a tree, birds are twittering in the leaves above.

Male Voice Over: -

Alice had got very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and had wandered further along to sit in the cool shade of a tree. She had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it and what is the use of a book, 'thought Alice' without pictures or conversation?

She was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid,) whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly an extraordinary thing happened.

A white rabbit with pink eyes ran close by taking a watch out of his waistcoat pocket.

White Rabbit Sung:

I'm late, I'm late, I'm late for a very important date.
No time to say "Hello – Goodbye"
I'm late, I'm late, I'm late!
And when I wave, I lose the time I save
My fuzzy ears and whiskers took me too much time to shave
I run and then I Hop! Hop! Hop!
I wish that I could fly.
There's danger if I dare to stop and here's the reason why.
You see I'm overdue, I'm in a rabbit stew.
Can't even stop to say Hello I'm late, I'm late, I'm late!
(He stops rushing back and forth – shaking the watch vigorously and listening to it).

(Speaks to himself)

It's the Duchess; She'll be so cross that I'm so late.
Oh Dear I must find the nearest rabbit hole.
(He looks around – goes behind tree).

Here's one – down I go!

(The rabbit had been totally unaware of Alice throughout whilst she has watched in amazement).

Alice

(looking behind the tree)

Why, there's quite a large rabbit hole here. I must see where he's gone.

Scene Two

"Down the rabbit hole" – played entirely in the black out.

(She stops behind tree. There's a snap blackout and a sound effect of rushing wind. Alice now speaks through an echo chamber effect in total darkness))

Alice: -

(Gives a scream)

Help its so dark and I seem to be falling right through the middle of the earth. I wonder how many miles I've fallen now, perhaps I shall arrive in Australia or even New Zealand. I'll have to ask my way – I wonder if they speak English.

(She pauses to listen)

Why I do declare I can still hear the white rabbit. He must be far below me.

White Rabbit: -

(through echo chamber) Oh dear I'm so late whatever will the Duchess say – she'll be so very cross. She's awful always but when she's cross she's fearsome
(fades) Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!

Scene Three

"In Wonderland"

Alice is discovered centre stage as the lights come up – to the music of a Bright March the Animals (*who must all represent a different one*) are parading with great interest around Alice who is apprehensive.

First Animal:

"Who are you?"

Alice:

(*Nervously*) "Alice"

Second Animal:

"Alice Who?"

Alice:

"Just Alice"

First Animal:

"That's a very odd name" (repeats) "Just Alice"

Third Animal:

"Perhaps she means Justice Alice"

Second Animal:

"She's far too young to be a Justice!"

First Animal:

"Have you ever tried anyone?"

Alice:

"Well my Mother finds me very trying at times"

First Animal:
(*Triumphantly*)

I told you she is a Justice! How awful – to try your own Mother. (All animals noisily agree).

Alice:

But you don't understand. I've just fallen down a rabbit hole following a white rabbit.

First Animal:

That wasn't a very wise thing to do, He's in terrible trouble.

Alice:

I think he had an appointment and he was late.

First Animal:

He's always late – especially when he has a meeting with the Duchess.

Alice:

A Duchess – Oh No!)

All Animals:

Oh Yes!)

First Animal:

She's awful)

Second Animal:

She's mean)

Third Animal:

She's spiteful)

All Animals:

She's Ugly)

Alice:

She sounds really frightening)

All this spoken
with great Clarity
and Pace

All: She is!)
Alice: I'll just hope our paths don't cross.

All:
(Resignedly) They will!.....They will!

Alice: Well now that we've all met could you tell me where I am?

Animals 2: We could!)
3: We would!) (Rhythmically)
4: We should!)
1: You're in *(Whole group together)* "WONDERLAND".

*New words to be adapted to the music of "Wonderful
Wonderful Copenhagen" from the musical of "Hans
Christian Anderson"*

(MD to decide how it is split)

Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderland!
It's such a nice place to be
Though you fell aground from the world above
It's quite really a nice place to see.
Most of the folk here are kind and refined
And you will be welcome to tea.
So stay for a while and we'll help you to smile
In this Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful
Wonderful, Wonderland

(Big finish and off stage we hear approaching the white rabbit. All animals exit waving goodbye).

W.Rabbit: Oh Dear! Oh Dear! Oh Dear! Oh Dear! *(Enters agitatedly)* The Duchess will be so angry because I'm late.

Alice: Excuse me Sir!

W.Rabbit: (Startled) Good Gracious who are you?

Alice: When I woke up this morning I was sure I was Alice but so many strange things are happening that I'm not sure anymore.

W.Rabbit: If you're not Alice who else can you be?

Alice: Well I can't be Melanie because she's got fuzzy hair, and I'm certainly not Sharon cos I know lots of things and she knows very little. Besides She's She and I'm Me!

W.Rabbit: It seems to be a big problem

Alice: (*Excitedly*) I know I'll try multiplication – I'm quite good at that. Four and four are nine and four times five is twelve.

(White rabbit shakes his head in disbelief)
(White Rabbit must now work the audience for responses)

W.Rabbit: Boys and Girls or should I say Girls and Boys. Would you like to help Alice (*wait and encourage responses*) I can't hear you! (*Appeal to adults*) Come on even the Big Girls and Boys (*Pause*) I can see quite a few big ones out there! Its OK I won't point you out – Unless you don't join in – and then I ask your age! So watch out – O.k. You're all kids now – come on all you kids, Mums and Dads, Grandpa and Grandma, Aunts and Uncles, Friends and Neighbors - All together now – Do you want to help Alice?

(*If W. Rabbit has achieved his aim, from now He will get the audience to respond – even the other characters will benefit from this state of play*)

W.Rabbit: Ok lets test your multiplication – what is two and four? Oi you down there (*points to woman in audience*) – no not you – the pretty one behind you – you got it wrong! Oh yes you did..

(*Hopefully whoever is picked will respond*).
Oh No I didn't!

W.Rabbit: Oh Yes you did. Etc (*rule of three applies in responses*)
Well you had better get the next one right or it's the dunce's hat for you. It's very tall and the people behind won't like it. So pay attention!
What is four times five.
(*By now whole audience should respond*)

Alice: *(to Audience)* Oh thank you – how could I have forgotten so quickly – you’ve been a great help!
(Speaks to W.Rabbit) Let me try geography I’m usually top of my class in those (thinks)
London is the capital of Paris
(W.Rabbit shakes his head each time)
and Paris is the capital of Rome. Oh dear I’m sure that’s not correct – perhaps I have changed into Sharon after all. How awful that would be!

W.Rabbit: (Enthusiastically) I say – do you know any poetry?

Alice: I’m frightened to try.
(W.rabbit persuades her to try)
How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale (now slightly uncertain)
How cheerfully he seems to grin
How neatly spread his claws
and welcome little fishes in
with gently smiling jaws!

W.Rabbit: *(Ruefully)* well I don’t think the little fishes will agree with that – for sure!

Alice: *(Starting to cry)* Oh Dear I’m not sure those are the right words. I must be turning into Sharon after all and I shall have to live in that pokey little house – Well I won’t *(determinedly)* I shall stay down here until they tell me who I am. And if I don’t like who they tell me I am I shall stay down here forever.

Now determined – she goes to exit.

Alice: *(waving to W.rabbit)*
See you later Alligator – whoops – I mean White Rabbit (exits)

W. Rabbit: *(responding swiftly)* in a while crocodile – whoops – I mean Alice *(waves off)*

*(W.Rabbit now centre stage – mobile phone rings –
(He berates the audience)*

W. Rabbit:

Oil – You’ve been told to turn those things off. (*All the time the mobile continues*).

Oh silly me – it’s mine – I must be getting as forgetful as Alice. (*He listens quivering*)

Yes! Yes! Your Royalty – You’re most magnificentness I’m hurrying as fast as I can – Be with you in ten shakes of a Ewes tail – ooooerr – I mean two shakes of a lamb’s tail! (*Pockets his mobile*) Do you know who that was? It’s the awful Duchess. She’s mean, nasty and spiteful. She’s a widow – No don’t feel sorry for her. She killed the Duke! She was sitting on a wall and the Duke threw a Brick at her – He did! So she sat him on a brick and threw a wall at him! He’s been long gone – should be there by now!

(Must now work the Audience to respond against the Duchess – this routine must be kept tight)

O.K. will you help me? – (*Wait for the “yes”*)

I can’t hear you? (*Louder response*) that’s great now all you need are the two words – First is “SHUT UP”!. Lets try it. (*rule of three times*) That’s fine, Second one is “Get Orf”. Let’s try that one

(Same business – Off stage we now hear the Duchess approaching midst cries from all the animals who enter hurriedly, fearfully looking over their shoulders, White Rabbit visibly trembling also).

Duchess:

(Sweep on Shrieking)

Out of my way Vermin! And that goes for you lot as well (*to Audience*)

Oh yes it does!

(This is the well-tryed response that elicits the audiences reply naturally).

**Audience
(And all animals
on stage):**

OH NO IT DOESN’T!! (*RULE OF 3*)

Duchess:

(To Audience)

And you lot can mind your own business!

W. Rabbit:

(Nervously to Audience)

OK Boys and Girls, our first word.

**(Animals join
in loudly):**

SHUT UP!

Duchess:

(Grandly)

How dare you speak to me like that?

W.Rabbit:

(Boldly Now)

OK Girls and Boys – second word

All:

GET ORFF!

Duchess:

You'll regret this – I'm going – but – I'll be back
*(She sweeps off as W.Rabbit encourages
another.....)*

All:

GET ORFF!

(Alice Enters)

Alice:

What was all that commotion about?

W.Rabbit:

The Duchess was here.

Alice:

Oh No!

All:

Oh Yes!

W.Rabbit:

Don't worry your head about her.

First Animal:

We will look after you (to other animals) won't we.

All:

(resounding response) — Yes

W.Rabbit:

We invite you to be our guest.

(This is a direct cue into the first scene Finale – taken from the musical “Beauty and the Beast” - - “Be our Guest”.

MD to decide how words are distributed between company, obviously Alice and White Rabbit must dominate).

FADE – BLACK OUT
