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ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Alice. She was curious, cheerful, and loved to imagine surprising things. One day, she was sitting beside her sister in the countryside. The weather was pleasant, the air was soft, and everything seemed very calm. But Alice was beginning to feel a little bored.

—What a slow day, she thought.

Suddenly, she saw a very strange white rabbit run by. It was wearing a vest, hurrying along, and looking at a watch.

—I shall be late! said the rabbit as he ran.

Alice opened her eyes wide.

—A talking rabbit! she exclaimed. —And he is carrying a watch!

Very curious, she jumped up and ran after him. The rabbit went into a hole under a tree, and Alice, without thinking too much, followed him inside.

The tunnel was deep and long. Alice fell and fell for a very long time, as if she were going down an endless well. As she fell, she saw shelves, jars, pictures, and strange objects on the walls.

—What a strange place, she said as she kept falling.

At last she reached the ground without getting hurt. In front of her was a hallway with many closed doors. She also found a tiny golden key on a glass table.

Alice tried the key in several doors until she opened one very small door. When she looked through it, she saw a lovely garden full of bright flowers, beautiful paths, and charming fountains.

—I want to go in there! said Alice.

But the door was far too small for her. Then she saw a little bottle with a label that said: “Drink me.”

Alice looked at it carefully.

—I hope it is not dangerous, she said.

She drank a little, and at once she began to grow smaller and smaller.

—Now I will be able to go through! she said happily.

But then she realized that she had left the key on the table, and now she could not reach it.

—Oh no! she said with worry.

Then she saw a little cake with the words: “Eat me.”

Alice tasted it, and this time she began to grow and grow until she became very tall.

—This is truly strange, she said. —First small, now giant.

Feeling confused, she began to cry. Her tears made a great pool around her. Later she changed size again and ended up swimming in her own tears along with several animals and curious creatures.

After that, Alice kept walking and came to a forest where everything seemed even stranger. There she met a blue caterpillar sitting on a mushroom.

The caterpillar looked at her calmly and asked:

—Who are you?

Alice stopped to think.

—I do not really know, she answered. —I have changed so many times today that I am no longer sure.

The caterpillar did not seem surprised.

—If you eat one side of the mushroom, you will grow. If you eat the other side, you will become small, he explained.

Alice took a little piece from each side and, little by little, managed to become just the right size to continue on her way.

Then she came to the house of a duchess. Everything there was in complete disorder. There was smoke in the kitchen, dishes everywhere, and a cook who kept putting pepper into the food. A very strange cat was smiling all the time.

Alice looked at the cat in wonder.

—Why is he smiling so much? she asked.

—He is a Cheshire Cat, they told her. —He always smiles like that.

Later, Alice met the cat again, sitting on a branch.

—Could you tell me which way I should go? Alice asked.

The cat smiled even more.

—That depends on where you want to go, he answered.

Alice thought for a moment.

—I do not much care where, she said.

—Then any road will do, replied the cat.

Alice went on walking and soon arrived at a very strange tea party. There were the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, and a little Dormouse sleeping between cups and plates.

—No room, no room! they said when they saw her coming.

—But there is plenty of room, Alice replied, sitting down anyway.

The table was full of teacups, bread, and crumbs. Everyone talked at the same time, changed seats for no reason, and asked questions that made no sense.

—Why is a raven like a writing desk? asked the Hatter.

Alice frowned.

—I do not know, she said.

—Neither do I, he answered.

Alice sighed.

—What a strange tea party.

After leaving that place, Alice came to the garden of the Queen of Hearts. It was full of rose bushes, living cards, and soldiers who looked like playing cards. Some gardeners were painting white roses red.

—Why are you painting those roses? Alice asked.

One of them answered in a hurry:

—Because by mistake we planted white roses, and the Queen wants them to be red.

At that moment, the Queen of Hearts appeared. She was accompanied by the King and a great procession.

—Who is this girl? asked the Queen in a loud voice.

Alice gave a little bow.

—My name is Alice, madam.

The Queen looked at her and then shouted, as she usually did for almost anything:

—Off with her head!

But no one seemed to take that order too seriously, because the Queen said it all the time.

Later, Alice was invited to a very strange game of croquet. Instead of mallets, they used flamingos, and instead of balls, they used hedgehogs. Everything was chaotic. The players ran in different directions, and no one followed the rules.

—This game is impossible, said Alice.

Meanwhile, the Cheshire Cat kept appearing and disappearing whenever he wanted, sometimes leaving only his smile floating in the air.

Alice continued wandering through that wonderful land, meeting curious creatures and impossible scenes. Every place was stranger

than the last. Sometimes she felt confused, but she kept going bravely, because she wanted to understand that incredible world.

At last, she came to a very odd trial. The Knave of Hearts was being accused of stealing some tarts. There were many witnesses, much noise, and very little sense in what was happening.

Alice listened for a while and then said:

—This makes no sense!

The Queen became furious.

—Off with her head! she shouted again.

But at that moment Alice began to grow. She became taller and taller and more sure of herself.

—You are nothing but a pack of cards, she said bravely.

Then all the cards flew through the air toward her.

Alice gave a little cry and suddenly opened her eyes.

She was once again beside her sister in the countryside, under the sunlight. There was no tunnel, no rabbit, no queen, and no castle. It had all been a strange and wonderful dream.

Her sister looked at her gently.

—You fell asleep, Alice, she said.

Alice smiled and sat up slowly.

—I have had a very curious dream, she answered.

And although she had returned to the ordinary world, she never forgot that journey full of surprises, strange creatures, and impossible places. For in her heart, Wonderland remained as a magical corner she could always return to through her imagination.

THE END

