

Alice In Wonderland

A PARTICIPATION PLAY FOR CHILDREN

by *WILLARD SIMMS*

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PIONEER DRAMA SERVICE, INC.
Denver, Colorado

For preview only

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i># of lines</i>
SARAH.....	30
ALICE.....	81
RABBIT.....	16
CATERPILLAR.....	20
DODO BIRD.....	15
QUEEN.....	32

SETTING: Two large, dark curtains are at either end of the playing area. Props, set pieces, etc. can be stored behind these curtains and brought out at appropriate times. Characters can make their entrances and exits, and can change costumes behind the curtains if necessary.

As the play opens, Alice (about 12 or so) and Sarah (Early 20's) are onstage. Alice is asleep.

SARAH: Hello. I didn't mean to interrupt you, but then it's time to begin, isn't it? Have you ever been to Wonderland? My sister Alice has. She goes there often - in her dreams. Do you suppose we could accompany her, just this once? All of us? I'm sure we could. Don't be afraid to use your imagination, because that's all it takes, you know. We'll do a play - and you and you and you - why everyone here will take part in it.

ALICE: (*Opens her eyes*) Oh Sarah, this is such a lovely, peaceful afternoon. I could lay out in this field forever.

SARAH: It is beautiful, isn't it?

ALICE: Forever and ever.

SARAH: Could you, Alice? Because I know how much you love exciting adventures.

ALICE: Oh yes, always, except for - except for some of the time.

SARAH: When you're older like me you'll find . . .

ALICE: I'll never get older! I'm going to fall asleep in the sunshine and dream for a thousand years.

SARAH: If only that were possible.

ALICE: But it is possible! I'll make it possible! You'll see.

SARAH: (*To audience*) That's my little sister, Alice. She often talks like that; she wants the world to be so much more interesting than it is. Look, she's asleep already. Let's join her shall we? In her dream? We can do it too, because everything's possible in a play. Alice's dreams often begin in a forest. And all of us here - can create that forest for her. Won't that be fun; just like magic? First we'll need some trees. Now this group (*Selects about a third of the children*) could you be the trees? Just hold your arms in the air like branches. That's good. Now have you heard the wind blowing through the trees? How does it sound? (*She makes a "whoooooo-ing" sound like the wind, until the children join in.*) Now, how do the branches of the trees wave in the wind? (*She demonstrates*) Now, let's try it all together; the sound of the wind and the branches blowing in the breeze. (*SARAH leads the children, waving her arms and "whoooooo-ing" like the wind*) Good, very good. Next - how about some squirrels? Tiny squirrels that scurry about searching and storing nuts. We don't always see them, but you can certainly hear them scurrying

about. Scurry, scurry, scurry. This group here, all the way to the back, can you be squirrels, and make a scurrying noise? Scurry, scurry, scurry. Let's hear you one more time. Scurry, scurry, scurry. Fine - very good. And now all we need are some birds. Birds that get upset with the squirrels scurrying about so much and start chirping and squacking. This group here, all of you, why don't you be the birds? You're all resting peacefully until the squirrels begin scurrying about frantically as someone passes through the forest. And so you go - cheep, cheep, squack!! Cheep, cheep, squack! Let's try it once again together. Cheep, cheep, squack! Excellent, we're going to have a wonderful forest. Shhh. I think Alice's dream is beginning.

ALICE: *(Gets up and stretches)* Ohhh, I must have fallen asleep for a moment. But I don't recognize this place, I wonder where I am?

SARAH: Come on now, first the trees, swaying in the wind. Come on, trees. *(Gets the children to act it out)*

ALICE: Are those trees? Could I be in a forest? No, no it's too quiet for a forest.

SARAH: All right squirrels, start your scurrying. Scurry, scurry, scurry. *(Gets them to join in)*

ALICE: What's that? Why it sounds like little animals of some sort. *(Walks closer)*

SARAH: Very good. Now for the birds. Come on, birds, time for you. Cheep, cheep, squack. *(Gets them to join in)*

ALICE: Oh, now I hear birds. Yes, those are birds, and they sound rather angry. And squirrels, that's what that other noise is. And look at the trees, blowing in the wind. I'm in a forest, an enchanted forest! My, what a strange and special place this must be.

(A white RABBIT, wearing an elegant waistcoat and carrying a large watch ENTERS)

RABBIT: Oh, this watch is impossible! I never should have bought a gold watch from a silversmith - it can't keep the right time, it's too confused.

SARAH: Very good. That's enough of the forest for a while, let's watch now.

ALICE: What? Am I seeing what I'm seeing?

RABBIT: Well, no matter what o'clock it is, it's time for me to go, I can't keep the Queen waiting. Why am I always late?

ALICE: A white rabbit wearing a waistcoat and carrying a watch?

RABBIT: She can be so unpleasant when she wants to be. Which is all the time, of course.

ALICE: I'm going to have to look into this.

RABBIT: So I'm off. The last thing I want to do is lose my head.
(EXITS)

ALICE: Wait! Wait for me, I want to talk to you. Oh, he's gone. I wonder if I should follow him. He went through that rabbit hole right over there. Yes, yes, I'm going to do it - this could be quite an adventure! Oh, but it's too small, much too small - how am I ever going to get through? *(There is a small curtain STAGE RIGHT which ALICE is attempting to squeeze through, unsuccessfully)* Oh, this just isn't fair!

(A large bottle with a sign saying "Drink Me" clatters up and down in front of a curtain at the other end of the stage.)

ALICE: What? What was that? *(Turns and sees the bottle, attached to a stick operated behind the curtain)* That bottle - it's moving. How peculiar. The sign says "Drink Me." I wonder if I should? Maybe it's just what I need to get through that rabbit hole. I'll try it. *(She drinks from the bottle and begins moving toward exit. If possible, the curtain should be widened as ALICE approaches it, to give the impression that ALICE is becoming smaller)* It's working. It's working. I'm getting smaller. Just a little bit more, and I can squeeze through.

(ALICE EXITS and there is a brief blackout. Lights come up on the RABBIT, now wearing a tie and gloves, and checking his appearance fastidiously)

RABBIT: Oh, I do look splendid. Always look either your very best or your very worst for the Queen. She simply won't tolerate anything in between. *(Bumping noises are heard and ALICE rolls onto the stage)*

ALICE: Oh goodness, how strange! *(Gets up, dusts herself off)* How odd, it felt like I was falling up instead of down. But, of course, that's impossible, isn't it? Rabbit holes always go down. Well I wonder where I am? Why, there's the white rabbit. Hello. Hello, here I am.

RABBIT: Hello? Who's saying hello? I don't like anyone saying hello to me when I'm in a hurry.

ALICE: It's only me, Alice. I just wanted to talk with you, if I could.

RABBIT: Impossible. Some other time. I'm in a rush, in a hurry, in a lather. Oh, my ears and whiskers, I can't stand around talking to the likes of you.

ALICE: But I only wanted to ask . . .

RABBIT: Can't ask, then I'll have to answer. Goodbye. Goodbye. Meet me at the Queen's if you must. If you dare. I must be on my way now. It's important. I'm important. But you probably already knew that. No time to tarry. *(EXITS)*

ALICE: I never knew that rabbits could be in such a hurry. I wonder if he's involved in the government. Usually governments move so slowly, like syrup, but perhaps it's different here. Everything is so curious.

CATERPILLAR: *(ENTERS, smoking a hooka pipe)* Hmm . . . That's a shallow observation.

ALICE: It is not. And you're curious, too. You're certainly large for a caterpillar. Or perhaps I'm just small for a girl.

CATERPILLAR: Possibly. It all depends on your point of view.

ALICE: Where did you come from?

CATERPILLAR: Why, from where I've been, of course. Where else would I come from? WHO are you?

ALICE: Well I . . . I hardly know anymore. Everything is so strange.

CATERPILLAR: What kind of answer is that? Explain yourself.

ALICE: But I'm afraid I can't explain myself, because I'm not myself, you see. Maybe you should tell me who you are first.

CATERPILLAR: Incorrect. I know who I am, but I don't know who you are. Therefore, you should explain yourself first.

ALICE: No, you should tell me who you are first!

CATERPILLAR: Would you like me to recite? I'm quite good.

ALICE: Recite what?

CATERPILLAR: Why my recitation, of course. I shall begin at the beginning and carry through until the end!
"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white.
And yet you incessantly stand on your head -
Do you think at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose -
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered one question, and that is enough."
Said his father. "Don't give yourself such airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!"

SARAH: You do that rather well.

CATERPILLAR: Quite so, I'm glad you noticed. (*To ALICE*) And now - if you'd like some advice, the tea party is waiting.

ALICE: A tea party? Will the white rabbit be there?

CATERPILLAR: To find that out, one must go and see.

DODO BIRD: (*ENTERS*) Impossible. We haven't had our caucus race yet.

CATERPILLAR: Ah, so ignorance will be represented after all. Or rather - misrepresented.

DODO BIRD: You have no right to talk like that. I mean, talk like that.

CATERPILLAR: Perhaps we shall meet again. When this creature is not around. Until then, remember, you belong where you go and

you go where you belong, you find what you seek and you seek what you find - but not always in that order. Farewell. *(EXITS)*

DODO BIRD: Well, we seem to have an abundance of dacer, I mean racers.

ALICE: That caterpillar - doesn't seem to like you.

DODO BIRD: Bad judgment that's all, bad judgment - happens in the best of families. Well, is everyone ready or shall I come in all over again?

ALICE: What?

DODO BIRD: Perhaps I should re-enter, as if I'd cust jome. Er, just come.

ALICE: I'm confused.

DODO BIRD: You're confused? Really? Ferpect. I mean perfect. Nothing better for a caucus race than confusion. I'm a dodo bird, you know, and dodo birds are extinct. But I'm sot instinct. Not extinct. Are you ready to race?

ALICE: But where's the course?

DODO BIRD: Why under your feet, naturally. Who ever heard of running a race where the course wasn't under your feet?

SARAH: Do you want all of us to enter?

DODO BIRD: Absolutely! Everyone here. The bore the metter. The more the better.

ALICE: But where do we run to?

DODO BIRD: Where do you run to? Why to where you are. You pun in race. You run in place. Like this. *(Demonstrates)* And the one who gets there first is also the one who gets there last. So we all win. And we all lose. It's absolutely fair. And fun.

SARAH: Well, it can't hurt to try. *(To audience)* Shall we enter? Why not? Just stay right there in your seats and move your feet and legs up and down as if you were running. Let's try it. That's remarkable. You can run in the race without even getting up. All right. We're ready now, Dodo.

PROPERTY LIST

Watch (RABBIT)

Bottle with sign "Drink Me"

Hooka pipe (CATERPILLAR)

Large hat (SARAH)

Teapot and cups

Sashes (CHILDREN)

Balloons

Croquet mallets

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