

QUEEN OF HEARTS

A full length play

By Tracy Wells

Based on characters from Lewis Carroll's

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
and
Through The Looking Glass

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CHARACTERS

3-4 F, 2-3 M, 25+ either

CORDELIA	A young woman who wants more from life than love and later becomes the Queen of Hearts; female
BETH	Cordelia's romance loving sister (may also play Delilah); female
JAMES	A potential suitor (may also play King); male
WHITE RABBIT	Herald in the court of Hearts; any gender
LILY	Talking flowers; any number, with lines divided accordingly; any gender
ROSE	
DAISY	
VIOLET	
CHESHIRE CAT	A cat with a large smile; any gender
DODO	A non-extinct bird; any gender
MOCK TURTLE	A turtle with a cow's head; any gender
BILL/BILLIE THE LIZARD	Hard working lizard; any gender
HUMPTY DUMPTY	A large egg; any gender
MARCH HARE	A well-mannered rabbit who goes mad; any gender
QUINN	A hatter who falls in love with Cordelia; probably male but can be any gender
DELILAH	A scheming wannabe royal; later becomes Duchess; female
JUDE	A scheming thief who later becomes the Knave of Hearts; any gender
JABBERWOCK	A beast terrorizing Wonderland; any gender or may be a large puppet or other solution** (see note)
GRYPHON	King's guard, later executioner; any gender

KING OF HEARTS	King of Wonderland; male
FROG	Amphibian who becomes a footman; any gender
FISH	Fish who becomes a footman; any gender
CATERPILLAR	Bubble blowing caterpillar; any gender
DORMOUSE	A mouse who grows big; any gender
TWEEDLE-DEE	A twin; any gender
TWEEDLE-DUM	A twin; any gender
CARD GUARDS (4+)	Cordelia's royal playing card guards, at least numbers 5, 2 and 7; any gender
ALICE	A ten year old girl from the other world; female
WONDERLANDIANS	Optional additional characters; any gender

*Many characters can be doubled for a much smaller cast. WONDERLANDIAN lines can be assigned as desired to characters in the scene/previous scene or can be new characters.

REGARDING THE JABBERWOCK**

While it would be ideal to have a full size Jabberwock on stage for the big battle at the end of Act One, I do realize this would be difficult for some performance groups. That being said you could also have just a head and some claws, perhaps a tail that can be manipulated from offstage. If using this option, adjust stage directions accordingly. There are probably numerous other ways to do the Jabberwock as well, such as silhouettes. Really, the sky is the limit here. I encourage you to find a solution that works best for your performance group and space.

RUNTIME

Approximately 105-110 minutes.

SETTING

A park in normal world and various locations in Wonderland.

TIME

Mid 1800s.

SET

The set can be as simple or complex as you'd like. For the park scene, I would recommend keeping it simple with muted colors. Perhaps no scenery is actually needed and the scene can be played in front of the curtain, leaving you the opportunity to open the curtain to reveal Wonderland. Wonderland should be over the top and bold, with bright colors and fun shapes.

COSTUMES

Costumes should reflect the time period for Cordelia, Beth and Alice. As for all Wonderland characters, have fun with this! Again, bright colors and bold patterns should be used along with fun textures and materials.

SCENE TRANSITIONS/WONDERLAND MAGIC

Feel free to be creative with transitions and background to create a magical Wonderland. Use movement and music and characters for scene transitions without using a blackout such as your ensemble interacting in lyrical ways in the background to create an “other-worldly” feeling.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

ACT I
Scene One

AT RISE: A park. A blanket is spread out and CORDELIA and BETH are seated on it. A baby carriage is nearby, BETH feeds a baby. CORDELIA is playing a solitaire card game.

CORDELIA
(placing cards)
And the Queen of Hearts is placed on the King....and then the Knave of Hearts...and then the rest all come following after, just as they should.
(places the last card, triumphantly)

I win!

BETH
(without looking up from her baby)
Hmmm.

CORDELIA
Did you hear me, Beth? I won!

BETH
(without looking up, or caring)
Mmm, hmm.

CORDELIA
Can you please look up from that infant long enough to congratulate me?

BETH
(puts bottle down and brings baby to her shoulder to burp)
It's a card game, Cordelia. It's not as if you accomplished something significant.

CORDELIA
And what would be an accomplishment significant enough to warrant congratulations from my dear older sister?

BETH
Oh, I don't know...perhaps getting married....or having children?

CORDELIA
Not this again.

BETH
You're almost twenty years old, Cordelia.

CORDELIA

And?

BETH

And it's time for you to settle down!

CORDELIA

What you mean is, it's time for me to settle.

BETH

Marrying James would hardly be settling.

CORDELIA

You just want me to marry him because he's your husband's friend.

BETH

(stands and places baby in carriage)

What's so wrong with wanting to remain close with my one and only sister? Wanting little baby Alice to have her Aunt Cordelia nearby?

CORDELIA

There's nothing wrong with that.

BETH

I agree. And there's nothing wrong with marrying James, either. He's kind. And wealthy.

CORDELIA

He's a snob. And a bore.

BETH

You think everyone's a bore.

CORDELIA

Last week when he came for tea, he talked about the increasing cost of shipping taxes for two thirds of an hour!

BETH

It's called conversation, Cordelia.

CORDELIA

Well it should be called...

(thinks)

I suppose I don't know if there is even a word for what that is—a conversation so tedious that it puts you right to sleep.

(thinks)

Perhaps we could call it Tweedle-some...or Galumph-if-nous.

BETH

That doesn't make any sense.

CORDELIA

Neither does talking about shipping taxes for an hour.

BETH

James was only doing what one does during a tea party. There's nothing wrong with that.

CORDELIA

Yes, well, maybe there's something wrong with tea parties then. Why can't we tell stories, and riddles, and have a bit of fun and nonsense with our tea?

BETH

That's just not the way it's done!

CORDELIA

Then maybe we should change the rules...do things a little bit different.

BETH

(disapprovingly)

You can't just change the rules whenever you want. Sometimes you just have to accept things the way they are. The sooner you do, the sooner you can be happy—like me.

CORDELIA

(looking in the carriage, maybe tucking baby in)

I'm sorry if I'm not content with an average life, Beth....being a wife, having children. Having every moment of the rest of my life planned out for me. I want excitement. Adventure!

BETH

And you can have that...with James. When his uncle dies, he'll be a Duke. A Duke, Cordelia! Do you know what that means?

CORDELIA

That he would have a silly title and waste all his time bowing and scraping before the King in court?

BETH

No! It means if you marry him you'll be a Duchess! What could be more exciting than that?

CORDELIA

I don't know. The guillotine?

BETH

(sighs)

You're rather lose your head than become a Duchess?

CORDELIA

Maybe. I don't know.

BETH

You can't be serious! I would give anything to be a Duchess!

(dreamily)

The luxury and comforts! The gowns and the servants and the parties...

CORDELIA

I don't care about things like that, Beth. I never have. You know that.

BETH

Fine. Then what do you care about?

CORDELIA

I care about imagination...and curiosity...and wonder! Those are the things that make the world go 'round.

BETH

(scoffing)

Tut, tut! 'Tis love that makes the world go round.

(JAMES enters. BETH sees him and smiles.)

And it's about to change your world right this minute.

(JAMES crosses to CORDELIA.)

JAMES

Miss Cordelia, may I have moment of your time?

(JAMES holds out his hand and helps a shocked CORDELIA stand.)

CORDELIA

James! What are you doing here?

JAMES

You know I love you.

CORDELIA

Are you sure? It might not be love. Perhaps it's indigestion.

JAMES

(ignoring her)

Which is why I've come to ask you a very important question.

(JAMES bends down on one knee as BETH rushes to JAMES'S side, excitedly.)

BETH

This is it, Cordelia!

CORDELIA

(interrupting, trying to get JAMES to stand)

James, really. You don't have to.

JAMES

(shrugging her off and ignoring her)

Cordelia, would you do me the honor—

CORDELIA

Seriously. We don't need to do this. It's a beautiful day. We could go for a walk. Or play croquet! Wouldn't that be fun?

BETH

Hush, Cordelia, and let the man speak!

JAMES

Would you do me the honor of accepting my hand in marriage?

CORDELIA

(not knowing what to say)

I—

(WHITE RABBIT enters, appearing seemingly out of nowhere, behind JAMES and BETH. He pulls out a pocket watch and looks at it. An inquisitive look crosses CORDELIA'S face.)

I—

JAMES

I know we can be happy together if you'll be my wife.

(WHITE RABBIT pulls out a pocket watch and looks at it, then turns it towards CORDELIA.)

WHITE RABBIT

'Tis time.

CORDELIA

Time for what?

BETH

Well? What's it going to be?

(CORDELIA stares at WHITE RABBIT for a moment before he exits, perhaps through the tree or a rabbit hole.)

CORDELIA

I have to go!

(CORDELIA rushes after the WHITE RABBIT and exits in the same manner as BETH calls out.)

BETH

Cordelia! Wait! Come back!

(Lights fade to black or the scene transitions in a creative way.)

ACT I
Scene Two

AT RISE:

Wonderland, perhaps in a forest or woodland clearing. FLOWERS are present, as are other brightly colored trees and plants. It is a magical place. At start of scene, WHITE RABBIT enters, in a hurry, perhaps entering from a tree or hole.

WHITE RABBIT

(looks at his watch)

Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!

(WHITE RABBIT starts to exit as CORDELIA enters from the same location the WHITE RABBIT entered from. She sees him scurrying off and calls out to him.)

CORDELIA

Rabbit! Come back! I need to talk to you!

(WHITE RABBIT exits without looking back. CORDELIA stops and shakes her head.)

I need to talk...to a rabbit?! Because apparently rabbits talk now. Or always have. Now I'm not so sure. Not sure of anything, really.

(indicating where she came from)

One minute I was over there, getting proposed to, and then the next minute I'm chasing after a talking rabbit who has a pocket watch and seems to be in quite a hurry to get—

(looks around)

Well I suppose I don't know where he was running off too. Here, I imagine...wherever here is.

LILY

Here is where you are now.

CORDELIA

(startled)

Who said that?

ROSE

Here is not quite where you were before.

CORDELIA

There it is again!

DAISY

Here is not there.

CORDELIA

I'm hearing voices, and yet there's no one around.

VIOLET

(making her presence known)

And there, of course, is not quite here.

CORDELIA

You! Flower! You're the one who's been speaking to me.

VIOLET

I am not simply a flower. I am a violet, and not a shrinking one. I speak my mind, when I have a mind to speak.

CORDELIA

Excuse my lack of manners. I've never encountered a talking violet before.

DAISY

That's not a surprise. Daisies are a much more chatty plant.

CORDELIA

You can speak too!

LILY

We all can!

ROSE

(annoyed, indicating CORDELIA)

This one's in need of a good watering. She can't seem to grasp the rules of polite conversation.

LILY

She does seem to be drooping a little.

ROSE

Perhaps she's a drooping variety.

CORDELIA

(touches her hair)

Well, it has been a rather windy day, but I thought I looked alright.

DAISY

Her petals aren't as vibrant as they used to be.

CORDELIA

My petals?

(lifts up the edge of her skirt)

Could you mean my ruffles?

VIOLET

Perhaps someone should pluck her out of the garden and stick her in a vase where she can at least be admired for a few days before she's sent to the trash bin.

CORDELIA

(aghast)

Trash bin! A vase! Do you think—

(realizes)

I'm not a flower!

ROSE

(scoffs)

Of course you are. What else could you be?

CORDELIA

I'm a...people! A person. A human girl!

LILY

Then why are you in a garden?

CORDELIA

I don't know why. I suppose because that's where the White Rabbit led me.

(looks around)

Led me here, to this strange place with talking flowers and hurried rabbits.

DAISY

Well that's Wonderland for you.

CORDELIA

Wonderland? Is that the name of this place?

ROSE

What else would it be called?

CORDELIA

I don't know. I only just arrived here. I've never heard of Wonderland before.

VIOLET

Never heard of Wonderland!

ROSE

I told you she was in need of watering.

LILY

Wonderland is an amazing place.

VIOLET

Filled with vibrant colors.

DAISY

Incredible creatures!

ROSE

And even more incredible plants...if you ask me.

CORDELIA

I agree!

ROSE

Finally this young lady speaks some sense.

LILY

Not non-sense.

DAISY

Which is no sense at all!

CORDELIA

Yes, I suppose that's true. Thank you. You have all been so helpful.

(CORDELIA takes a few steps, but stops, looking confused.)

VIOLET

If we've been helpful, then why do you look as if you still need help?

CORDELIA

Maybe because I only just learned where I am and I don't know how I got here or where I'm supposed to go next.

(CHESHIRE CAT appears, perhaps in a tree, a grin on its face.)

CHESHIRE CAT

That depends a great deal on where you want to get to.

(CORDELIA startles as she sees the CHESHIRE CAT.)

CORDELIA

Where did that come from?

VIOLET

That's not a that.

LILY

That is a cat!

DAISY

A Cheshire cat to be exact.

CORDELIA

But why is it grinning?

ROSE

Because it's happy. Obviously. Someone please water this young lady!

CORDELIA

(to CHESHIRE CAT)

What if I don't know where I want to get to? I didn't even know Wonderland existed until the White Rabbit brought me here!

CHESHIRE CAT

Did the Rabbit bring you here? Or did you bring yourself?

CORDELIA

Well he appeared in my woods. I didn't ask him to come.

CHESHIRE CAT

And did he ask you to follow him?

CORDELIA

No. I suppose he didn't.

CHESHIRE CAT

Then it seems you've brought yourself to this place, as one usually does, and therefore it is up to you where your journey will lead you.

CORDELIA

But how will I know when I get there?

CHESHIRE CAT

If you're lucky, you'll feel it.

CORDELIA

Where? In my heart?

CHESHIRE CAT

In my experience, the heart can be misleading, especially on a journey.

CORDELIA

So which way should I go?

CHESHIRE CAT

It doesn't matter which way you go.

CORDELIA

So long as I get somewhere.

CHESHIRE CAT

Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough.

CORDELIA

Will you come with me?

CHESHIRE CAT

(perhaps moving around—or parts of him)

I will be here....and there....any everywhere.

CORDELIA

(stepping in one direction)

Perhaps I will go this way.

CHESHIRE CAT

In that direction lives a March Hare.

CORDELIA

I've already met a rabbit today. I don't know if I have a need to meet another.

(steps forward, toward the audience)

And this way?

CHESHIRE CAT

In that direction lives the Hatter.

DAISY

They say he's mad.

CHESHIRE CAT

We're all mad here in Wonderland—in one way or another. Even you.

CORDELIA

I'm not mad!

CHESHIRE CAT

(with a grin)

Not yet, anyway.

CORDELIA

(steps in the other direction)

And what lies in this direction?

CHESHIRE CAT

The future, my dear!

CORDELIA

Really?

CHESHIRE CAT

Or a village. I can't remember which.

CORDELIA

I guess I won't know unless I choose a path.

CHESHIRE CAT

(with a smile)

My thoughts, exactly.

CORDELIA

Then off I go!

(CORDELIA exits, along with CHESHIRE CAT, who perhaps disappears slowly, one piece at a time, or slowly as he entered.)

VIOLET

A peculiar bloom, that one.

DAISY

I think she might be a flower after all.

LILY

But what sort of flower is she? A pansy? A daffodil?

ROSE

Drooping the way she does, there's only one kind of flower she could be...a bleeding heart.
(Lights fade to black or scene changes.)

ACT I
Scene Three

AT RISE:

A village. But not an ordinary village. A Wonderland village. It's bright and vibrant. There are carts selling brightly colored wares and interesting shopfronts. WONDERLANDIANS, including MOCK TURTLE and DODO are selling wares, while others, including MARCH HARE are milling about. In the center is a vibrant announcement platform, near which is a bench.

DODO

(holding up a brightly colored apple)

Fresh pro-produce! Pro-produce I did grow-grow! Apples! Get your apples for sale! Red apples, green apples, yellow apples, purple apples. Add them to your dough-dough and make a delicious and nutritious and tastericious pie!

(CORDELIA enters, looking around in wonder.)

CORDELIA

I guess there really *was* a village in this direction!

(BILL THE LIZARD enters, rushing, carrying a long board.)

BILL

Coming through! Coming through!

CORDELIA

Oh, my!

(BILL turns sharply, nearly knocking over several WONDERLANDIANS, including CORDELIA.)

BILL

No, not yours. Mine.

CORDELIA

I didn't mean—

(BILL turns sharply again, nearly knocking over several WONDERLANDIANS, including CORDELIA.)

BILL

I don't see you with any tools in which to turn this board into a turducken house.

CORDELIA

Of course I don't. I wouldn't know the first thing about carpentry...or turduckens.

BILL

Then don't go around claiming boards that don't belong to you.

(BILL turns sharply again, nearly knocking over CORDELIA and several WONDERLANDIANS CORDELIA, and crosses to exit.)

CORDELIA

I won't! I don't! I didn't! I've only been in this village for a minute and I'm already angering the locals. I'd better watch my manners.

MARCH HARE

Manners are definitely best when they are minded. Manners over mind I always say.

(thinks)

Or is it mind over manners?

MOCK TURTLE

Soup here! Delicious, nutritious, splendoritious turtle soup!

CORDELIA

(crossing to MOCK TURTLE)

You're a turtle and you're selling turtle soup? Isn't that a little cruel?

MOCK TURTLE

I'm not a turtle—I'm a mock turtle. Here, try some!

(shoves a spoon in her mouth)

CORDELIA

Why...that's delicious!

MOCK TURTLE

And not a mock turtle in sight!

CORDELIA

Except for you.

MOCK TURTLE

That's true!

(DODO crosses to CORDELIA, holding a blue apple.)

DODO

How about an apple to go-go with your soup?

CORDELIA

You're a Dodo bird!

DODO

I know-know.

CORDELIA

But you're extinct!

DODO

Am I? I don't think so-so.

CORDELIA

And that can't be an apple!

DODO

No-no?

CORDELIA

Because it's blue!

DODO

Oh-oh? Is it? It's not crying any tears, so it can't be blue. But it sure looks tasty!

(DODO takes a bite of the apple as HUMPTY DUMPTY enters, looking around him worriedly, avoiding others, etc.)

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Out of my way! Coming though. Coming through!

CORDELIA

Is that—

MARCH HARE

It is indeed Humpty Dumpty, the great big, fragile egg who is constantly in fear of breaking. Mr. Dumpty, old chap, how are you this fine day?

HUMPTY DUMPTY

I would be better if there weren't so many dangers.

(moves out of the way as MARCH HARE attempts to pat him)

Watch it! I'm fragile!

MARCH HARE

I was only using my manners to be polite and suggest that you might want to take a seat.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Oh, right. That might be a good idea. Unless it's too hard...or sharp...or dirty...
(pats the bench, testing it)

CORDELIA

I could try it out first. That way you'll know if it's safe.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Would you? That would be wonderful.

CORDELIA

(sits)

It's quite lovely, actually. Why don't you join me?
(pats the seat next to her)

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Alright. I think I will!

(HUMPTY DUMPTY sits, taken up most of the bench, and knocks CORDELIA off of it without realizing. MARCH HARE extends a hand to help her up as QUINN enters, wearing several hats and carrying a pole on which are several more hats.)

QUINN

Hats for sale! Bowlers and ballers and buckets and berets! Beanies and boonies and boaters and Bretons!

DODO

Oh no-no!

MARCH HARE

Goodness me, it's the Hatter!

QUINN

Panamas and porkpies! Sailors and shovels!

CORDELIA

What's the matter with the Hatter?

HUMPTY DUMPTY

He's just...

ALL (except CORDELIA and QUINN)

Mad!

CORDELIA

Mad? As in...crazy?

MARCH HARE

No, of course not. It wouldn't be polite to call him crazy. Nor would it be true.

MOCK TURTLE

More like...not happy.

(BILL enters, carrying a toolbox and hammer. He bumps into QUINN, dropping the hammer on QUINN'S toe.)

QUINN

Ow!

BILL

Sorry Quinn! I didn't see you there.

QUINN

Then open your eyes!

(BILL picks up his hammer as QUINN turns DODO.)

Do you want to buy a hat, Dodo?

DODO

No-no!

QUINN

Fine! I didn't want to sell you one anyway!

(DELILAH and JUDE enter. They seem to be looking for trouble, though everyone is unaware.)

DELILAH

Looks like the riff are raffing today.

JUDE

Don't they always?

(JUDE steals an apple and starts to eat it. DELILAH stops him.)

DELILAH

Would you cut that out, Jude? Someone will see you.

JUDE

So?

DELILAH

So the King will cut off your hand for stealing!

JUDE

That's alright. I have another.

DELILAH

Yes, well, if we're going to find ourselves in the King's court, we're going to need to keep our hands firmly attached to the rest of our bodies.

(QUINN crosses to DELILAH and JUDE. JUDE hides the apple.)

JUDE

Oh, great. It's the Hatter.

(QUINN is loud, drawing the attention of CORDELIA and others.)

QUINN

I'm guessing you're not buying any hats today, Delilah?

DELILAH

There's only one thing you'll find on top of this head—

JUDE

The executioner's blade?

DELILAH

No! Of course not. Why would you say such a thing?

JUDE

Because I know you.

DELILAH

The only adornment you'll ever find on this head is a crown.

JUDE

You? The queen of Wonderland? Not likely!

DELILAH

Fine! A ladyship, then. Or a duchess.

(to QUINN)

Does a duchess wear a crown?

QUINN

How should I know?

(QUINN stomps away, angrily, interacting with WONDERLANDIANS during the next few lines.)

CORDELIA

Why is he so mad?

MARCH HARE

No one knows. It's not spoken aloud in polite conversation.

MOCK TURTLE

Some say he had a terrible childhood.

BILL

Others say both sides of his bed are the *wrong* side.

(DELILAH and JUDE cross over to CORDELIA.)

DELILAH

I'll tell you why he's so mad...do you see that hair?

JUDE

And those clothes?

CORDELIA

He looks perfectly ordinary to me.

DELILAH

Exactly! Who does he think he is, clomping around Wonderland looking like that?

JUDE

The only thing interesting about the Hatter is his hats.

CORDELIA

They are quite lovely.

DELILAH

Yes, well, I suppose that is something, but here in Wonderland, we live extraordinary lives filled with excitement and adventure.

JUDE

We love nonsense and fun.

CORDELIA

That sounds amazing!

QUINN

(passing by)

That sounds ridiculous.

DELILAH

(calling after him)

And you wonder why no one wants to come to your tea parties!

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Well, I think he's lonely.

ALL (except HUMPTY DUMPTY and QUINN)

Lonely!

MOCK TURTLE

How can you be lonely in Wonderland?

DODO

There's people wherever you go-go!

BILL

And creatures!

MARCH HARE

In Wonderland, even when you think you're all alone, chances are you're not.

CORDELIA

That's true! I was in the forest, quite alone, or so I thought, when suddenly the flowers themselves began to speak!

MOCK TURTLE

Ah yes, the flowers. How is Rose these days?

CORDELIA

Quite sassy, if you ask me.

MOCK TURTLE

(chuckles)

Good ole' Rose.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Yes, Wonderland is full of many living things, but when you're afraid of breaking, you'll do anything to make sure no one gets too close.

(shrinks away from them)

CORDELIA

But why is the Hatter afraid of breaking?

HUMPTY DUMPTY

A shell's not the only thing that can shatter, you know.

(stands and brings his hands to his heart)

The heart can be pretty fragile too. If you're not careful, you can find yourself the owner of a broken heart.

JUDE

(with a smirk, to DELILAH, holding the apple)

And we're about to have ourselves a broken egg!

(JUDE rolls the apple at HUMPTY DUMPTY, who wobbles.)

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Help!

(MARCH HARE and TURTE stabilize him as CORDELIA backs into QUINN, causing him to drop his hats. He turns, angrily.)

QUINN

(angrily)

Would you watch where you're—

CORDELIA

(quickly)

I'm so sorry I—

(QUINN and CORDELIA suddenly stop and look at one another. Perhaps the lights change. Perhaps everyone else freezes.)

CORDELIA

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to—

QUINN

It's alright. It was probably my fault. I can be rather clumsy sometimes.

(picks up a hat)

And besides...they're just hats.

CORDELIA

(picks up a hat)

These aren't just hats—they're works of art!

QUINN

You think so?

CORDELIA

I know so.

(puts hat on her head)

How do I look?

QUINN

(smiles)

Silly?

CORDELIA

Really?

QUINN

Well, you *do* have it on backwards.

(fixes it for her)

There, that's better.

(pulls a mirror out of his coat and shows her)

CORDELIA

I look...

CORDELIA and QUINN

Beautiful.

(They look at one another. They smile shyly, then look away. They stand. QUINN starts to pick up the hats. CORDELIA takes off the hat and holds it out to him.)

CORDELIA

Here.

QUINN

No. Keep it.

CORDELIA

I couldn't.

(tries to give it back to him)

QUINN

You must. Now that I've seen it on your head I can't imagine it on anyone else's.

CORDELIA

Alright. Thank you, Mr. Hatter.

(CORDELIA puts it on her head, then takes a step toward QUINN.)

QUINN

Call me Quinn.

CORDELIA

(smiles)

Quinn. Thank you.

QUINN

And you are?

CORDELIA

Oh, me? I'm—

(CORDELIA is suddenly stopped by the sound of a ferocious creature—the JABBERWOCK. Lighting changes. ALL are afraid.)

What was that?

QUINN

It's the Jabberwock! We've got to hide!

(QUINN takes CORDELIA by the hand they hide as ALL WONDERLANDIANS hide. The village darkens and is filled with sounds of the JABBERWOCK. Perhaps damage is done to the village. The JABBERWOCK could also enter, terrorizing the town. Eventually it leaves and the scene brightens again. ALL WONDERLANDIANS come out from their hiding places.)

MARCH HARE

Oh heavens! What a mess. Is everyone alright?

DODO

I don't know-know. But I think so-so.

QUINN

We've all gotten good at hiding from the Jabberwock.

MOCK TURTLE

(taps his shell)

Luckily I always carry a hiding spot with me!

DELILAH

(touches her head)

Looks like we all kept our heads.

JUDE

(holds up his hands)

And the rest of our parts.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Speak for yourself! Did I crack? Are my insides oozing on my outsides?

(inspecting himself)

BILL

(looking him over)

Just a small little gash, but I can fix that.

(pulls tape out of his toolbox and fixes HUMPTY DUMPTY)

QUINN

How about you? Are you alright?

CORDELIA

Yes, of course. Thanks to you, that is. What was that thing?

WONDERLANDIAN

That was the Jabberwock—the most ferocious beast that ever there was!

DELILAH

He's been terrorizing Wonderland for years!

WONDERLANDIAN

Decades!

DODO

Do-deca-dades!

WONDERLANDIAN

It has eyes that flame!

WONDERLANDIAN

Jaws that bite!

WONDERLANDIAN

And claws that catch!

CORDELIA

Is there nothing that can be done about this Jabberwock?

WONDERLANDIAN

We've tried everything.

MARCH HARE

It has absolutely no manners and cannot be reasoned with.

WONDERLANDIAN

Or lured away.

CORDELIA

Has anyone tried to....

JUDE

It can't be killed.

QUINN

We tried.

CORDELIA

You tried?

QUINN

Well not, me, exactly.

DELILAH

The King's guard.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

But the Jabberwock's too tough. He can't be broken.

DODO

So-so we live in fear.

MOCK TURTLE

And we hide.

ALL

(except CORDELIA)

Beware the Jabberwock!

CORDELIA

How awful!

(CHESHIRE CAT appears.)

CHESHIRE CAT

Awful, indeed.

CORDELIA

(jumps, then sees CAT)

You again!

CHESHIRE CAT

Though, if you ask me, a problem's only a problem until you solve it.

(The sound of trumpeting horns is heard. HUMPTY DUMPTY jumps ALL turn to look as WHITE RABBIT enters, wearing royal attire and carrying a trumpet. If not already present, additional WONDERLANDIANS enter. CHESHIRE CAT disappears.)

CORDELIA

It's the White Rabbit!

(WHITE RABBIT crosses to stand on the platform and blows into his trumpet again. HUMPTY DUMPTY jumps.)

HUMPTY DUMPTY

That trumpet's so loud, I'm likely to jump out of my shell!

WHITE RABBIT

Here ye! Here ye! 'Tis time. 'Tis time!

CORDELIA

Time for what?

(WHITE RABBIT blows into his trumpet again. GRYPHON enters, marching, followed by KING OF HEARTS. ALL except CORDELIA and QUINN are excited, waving and cheering.)

JUDE

It's the King of Hearts!

CORDELIA

Just like the playing cards!

(KING smiles, waves and nods as he passes by.)

DELILAH

(waving enthusiastically)

Your majesty! Here! Here! Over here!

(curtsies.)

KING

So nice to see everyone.

(KING continues walking toward platform as DELILAH turns to others, excitedly.)

DELILAH

Did you hear that? The King of Hearts was excited to see me!

(As they reach the platform, GRYPHON stands to one side and KING steps on the platform. WHITE RABBIT stands to the other side and addresses the crowd.)

WHITE RABBIT

All hail the King of Hearts who graces us with his presence. Today he has a proclamation regarding the Jabberwock.

(WONDERLANDIANS turn to one another in excitement and fear, ad-libbing lines such as "Did you hear that?", "The Jabberwock!", "I wonder what it's going to be?" etc.)

KING

Thank you citizens of Wonderland for your continued bravery and courage in the face of the dreadful enemy known as the Jabberwock.

(ALL applaud. KING starts to step down but is stopped by GRYPHON.)

GRYPHON

Not yet, not yet! There's more you wanted to say, isn't that right, your Highness?

KING

Yes, of course.

(steps back up on platform)

For too long we have suffered the Jabberwock's continued assaults, but that ends now!

(ALL cheer. KING starts to step down but is stopped by GRYPHON again.)

GRYPHON

Not yet, not yet! You haven't told them your plan for ending the Jabberwock's reign of terror.

KING

Oh, right.

(steps back up onto platform)

I am here to announce a contest.

MARCH HARE

A contest?

KING

Yes.

(KING starts to step down, but GRYPHON shakes his head.)

BILL

What kind of contest?

KING

We know the Jabberwock cannot be defeated with swords and arrows, nor have we been successful in forcing him to leave Wonderland.

GRYPHON

No matter what strategies we've come up with, nothing seems to work.

WHITE RABBIT

That's why we need your help.

DODO

Oh? Oh?

KING

Yes, you, the people of Wonderland. Nowhere else in the world is there a collection of people so creative and unique as right here in our fair land. In order to defeat the Jabberwock we need each of you to harness that creativity now.

MOCK TURTLE

But how?

KING

How?

MOCK TURTLE

Yes. That's what I'm asking you.

KING

No. That's what I'm asking you.

MOCK TURTLE

No, that's what I'm asking you!

WHITE RABBIT

If we knew the answer we wouldn't be here!

GRYPHON

We believe that the only way to defeat the Jabberwock is to chop off its head.

CORDELIA

Off with his head?!

GRYPHON

That's right!

DELILAH

But how? The monster is enormous!

QUINN

Its scaly dragon's body has proven impenetrable.

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Its fish-like head and antennae unbreakable!

GRYPHON

That's why we've come to you.

KING

Whoever can find a way to conquer the Jabberwock will win a place in the Court of Hearts and all the comforts and luxury that it implies.

DELILAH

Did you hear that? A place in court!

JUDE

It's what we've been waiting for!

KING

Who among you will take on this challenge?

(DELILAH and JUDE raise their hands excitedly.)

DELILAH and JUDE

We will!

KING

Wonderful. Herald, take down their names.

WHITE RABBIT

Of course, your Highness.

DELILAH

I'm Delilah.

(to KING)

Trust me. You'll want to remember that name Your Majesty.

JUDE

And I'm Jude.

WHITE RABBIT

Very well.

(WHITE RABBIT looks through his pockets but only finds a pocket watch, so he pretends to write in the air.)

GRYPHON

Anyone else up to the task?

CORDELIA

It's all so barbaric! Plotting to chop off the poor beast's head.

QUINN

Perhaps there's another way.

CORDELIA

Do you think?

QUINN

I don't know. But somehow, standing here with you, I feel like there might be.
(raises his hand)

I'll do it!

CORDELIA

And I'll help!

WHITE RABBIT

And what is your name?

QUINN

I'm Quinn, the Hatter.

WHITE RABBIT

And you? What are you called?

QUINN

Oh, yes! I never did get your name.

CORDELIA

It's Cordelia.

QUINN

Cordelia. Nice to meet you.

(holds out his hand, which CORDELIA takes; they share a moment)

WHITE RABBIT

Quinn and Cordelia. Very good.

(WHITE RABBIT writes their names in the air.)

KING

Wonderful! Then let the contest begin! Beware the Jabberwock!

ALL

Beware the Jabberwock!

(WHITE RABBIT blows into his horn, scaring HUMPTY DUMPTY, who falls.)

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Now look what you've done! My shell is cracked!

(KING helps HUMPTY DUMPTY up.)

KING

Come with us, Humpty Dumpty. My men will put you back together again.

(GRYPHON leads the KING offstage with HUMPTY DUMPTY and WHITE RABBIT following. ALL WONDERLANDIANS turn to one another in excitement.)

QUINN

We don't have a moment to lose if we're going to save Wonderland.

CORDELIA

And the Jabberwock!

QUINN

That's right. Let's go!

(QUINN takes CORDELIA'S hand and they exit.)

DELILAH

It looks like we have some competition with the hatter and his mysterious new friend.

JUDE

Cordelia. An eager young woman who seemingly appeared out of thin air.

DELILAH

We can't let them succeed. I must win that prize!

JUDE

But how will you do that?

DELILAH

By any means necessary! I'll use deception and trickery and deceit if I have to.

JUDE

But isn't that...immoral?

DELILAH

Moral or immoral, it's all the same to me. But one thing's for certain—I'll make sure we get into the Court of Hearts—one way or another!

(Lights fade to black or scene changes.)

ACT I
Scene Four

AT RISE:

Wonderland, perhaps in a forest or woodland clearing as before. FLOWERS are present. CATERPILLAR is seated on a mushroom off to one side, though at start of scene he is concealed or camouflaged.

QUINN

(looking around)

Perhaps there's something in these woods that will help us defeat the Jabberwock.

CORDELIA

Without removing its head.

QUINN

Right.

(looks around, and trips, bumping into CORDELIA)

CORDELIA

(chuckles)

You really ought to learn to be more careful, Quinn.

QUINN

Sorry. I told you I was clumsy. My foot got stuck on this stick.

(picks up stick and has an idea)

We could gather some sticks! And maybe these leaves?

CORDELIA

And do what with them?

QUINN

Maybe fashion some sort of a net?

CORDELIA

If swords and arrows haven't kept the creature at bay, then leaves and sticks certainly won't.

QUINN

Good point.

CORDELIA

(excitedly, running to some leaves and looking at them)

Unless they're some sort of magical Wonderland leaves!

QUINN

They look like plain old leaves to me.

ROSE

Who are you calling plain?

CORDELIA

Rose!

ROSE

Do I know you?

CORDELIA

We met earlier. Don't you remember?

ROSE

I should think not.

(ALL other FLOWERS reveal themselves.)

VIOLET

Perhaps you met some other flowers.

DAISY

We may share similar genus and species, but just like you *humans*, I assure you that each flower in Wonderland is its own unique individual.

CORDELIA

Of course. I apologize.

LILY

What do you want with our leaves, anyway?

CORDELIA

We were hoping they might contain magic that could be used to defeat the Jabberwock.

LILY

(frightened)

The Jabberwock! Where?

VIOLET

Save us!

CORDELIA

I thought Wonderland violets weren't the shrinking kind?

VIOLET

This one is!

LILY

And I'm a lily-livered lily...at least when it comes to the Jabberwock.

FLOWERS

Beware the Jabberwock!

QUINN

(to ROSE)

Perhaps your thorns could be helpful?

ROSE

Sorry, but you're barking up the wrong tree.

QUINN

You mean the wrong flower?

ROSE

No. That wouldn't make sense.

QUINN

Oh.

DAISY

Sorry we couldn't help you.

QUINN

That's alright. We'll figure out something.

(DELILAH and JUDE enter, carrying a sword. JUDE holds it up.)

JUDE

Not before we do.

QUINN

You're going to use a sword?

DELILAH

How else are we going to chop off its head?

JUDE

Besides, this is a special sword. A vorpal sword.

CORDELIA

What's a vorpal sword?

DELILAH

What's a vorpal sword? Do you hear that? Cordelia doesn't know what a vorpal sword is.

JUDE

Everyone knows what a vorpal sword is.

QUINN

I don't. Vorpal is a nonsense word. It doesn't mean anything.

DELILAH

So? Wonderland is full of nonsense.

JUDE

Is Cordelia even *from* Wonderland?

CORDELIA

No. I'm not.

DELILAH, JUDE and QUINN

You're not?!

CORDELIA

No. I only just arrived here today. Or was it yesterday? Or a month ago?
(confused)

QUINN

But if you aren't from here, then where are you from?

CORDELIA

Oh, that's easy! I'm from—

(stops and thinks)

Hmmm. I can't remember. I knew where I came from when I was there, but now that I'm here I no longer know.

DELILAH

And how did you get here?

CORDELIA

Oh! That's an easy one. I followed the White Rabbit.

JUDE

The White Rabbit?

DELILAH

You mean the herald from the Court of Hearts?

CORDELIA

I suppose so.

DELILAH

That's odd.

CORDELIA

That a rabbit is a herald in the King's court?

DELILAH

No. Of course not.

CORDELIA

Well, it's odd where I come from. Our animals don't talk or blow trumpets.

JUDE

Then what do they do?

CORDELIA

Oh, you know...the usual...they eat and sleep. And eat again.

JUDE

That sounds positively dreary, if you ask me. Here, talking animals are quite commonplace.

(FISH and FROG enter.)

DELILAH

Indeed. And many of them serve in the Court of Hearts.

(sees FISH and FROG)

Why, that fish and frog might very well be the King's footman for all we know.

(calls out)

Oh, Fish? Frog? Tell me, are you currently employed as the King's footman?

FISH

Who, us?

DELILAH

Do you see any other fish or frogs out for a stroll in the forest?

FISH

I guess not.

FROG

To answer your question, neither of us is a footman.

FISH

I'm a barber.

FROG

(proudly)

And I'm a dentist!

DELILAH

(unimpressed)

Pity. I always thought frogs and fish would make excellent footman.

(waves them away)

Now, be gone.

FROG

But we were just enjoying a nice walk in the—

DELILAH

Be gone!

(FROG and FISH exit, scurrying in fear.)

CORDELIA

Was it really necessary to shout at them like that?

DELILAH

I'm only practicing for when I win this contest and become a member of the King's court.

JUDE

Everyone knows you're practically required to yell and shout when you're a royal.

CORDELIA

Is that so?

DELILAH

It is.

(indicating QUINN)

In fact, your friend the Hatter would make a fine royal, considering how often he stomps around Wonderland yelling at everyone.

JUDE

What a shame he'll never find out, since he's going to lose this contest!

DELILAH

Too right!

(JUDE and DELILAH laugh, then turn to leave.)

See you around, peasants.

JUDE

And good luck...you're gonna need it!

(JUDE and DELILAH exit, laughing.)

CORDELIA

(turns to QUINN, worried)

We can't let Delilah and Jude behead the Jabberwock!

QUINN

There might not be another way.

CORDELIA

There has to be! I didn't leave my old world behind to come here and hurt other living creatures.

QUINN

Then what did you come here for?

CORDELIA

I don't know...adventure? Excitement?

QUINN

Friendship.

CORDELIA

Sure. Yes.

QUINN

Love?

CORDELIA

Love?

(surprised)

No, not love!

QUINN

(disappointed)

Oh.

CORDELIA

(quickly)

I only meant that wasn't why I came here.

(thinks)

In fact, that may be the very thing I was running from.

QUINN

Running away from love? Hmm. Yes... perhaps I've done the same thing. Jude and Delilah were right—I *do* stomp around Wonderland and I do yell. It keeps people at a safe distance.

CORDELIA

It keeps you from getting...hurt.

(CORDELIA and QUINN lock eyes.)

QUINN

I suppose it does.

(takes a step toward CORDELIA)

Only...I find that when it comes to you, I don't want so much distance.

CORDELIA

(takes a step towards QUINN)

No?

QUINN

No.

(takes another step towards CORDELIA)

In fact, maybe for the first time I feel like I might actually be running towards something.

(CORDELIA and QUINN each take a step toward one another, eyes locked. They are having a moment. Then suddenly the sound of the JABBERWOCK is heard in the distance. The moment is broken as they look around, afraid.)

CORDELIA

The Jabberwock!

QUINN

Don't worry. It's not close.

CORDELIA

But it's out there.

QUINN

Which is why we need to find a solution...and fast!

(QUINN and CORDELIA look around hastily as CATERPILLAR reveals itself. He blows bubbles at opportune moments.)

CATERPILLAR

When trouble is upon you, there's no time to guess. It's a solution you seek...yes?

CORDELIA

Who are you?

CATERPILLAR

Who are *you*?

CORDELIA

I'm Cordelia...or at least I think I am.

CATERPILLAR

What do you mean by that? Explain yourself!

CORDELIA

If only I could! I thought I knew when I got here and where I came from, but it appears I do not. I believe my name is Cordelia, but perhaps that is wrong too. There's something about Wonderland which makes you not believe what it is you already know. You know?

CATERPILLAR

I don't know!

QUINN

I don't know either. This is all so confusing.

CATERPILLAR

Why are you here?

QUINN

In this forest?

CATERPILLAR

Yes. What is it you want?

QUINN

We want to find a way to defeat the Jabberwock.

CORDELIA

Without killing it.

CATERPILLAR

Well that is very smart indeed, since the Jabberwock doesn't seem to want to be killed.

QUINN

I'm sure he doesn't.

CATERPILLAR

And how do you suppose you will accomplish this task?

QUINN

We were hoping we might find something or someone who could help us. Maybe that's you!

CATERPILLAR

There are many things in this forest that can help you.

CORDELIA

Like what?

CATERPILLAR

Well, for example, there are birds that can speak nine languages.

QUINN

Can they speak Jabberwockese? Maybe the birds can reason with it!

CATERPILLAR

I don't think even the Jabberwock speaks Jabberwockese.

CORDELIA

That's not very helpful.

CATERPILLAR

And then there are the trees whose branches can knit the most beautiful scarves. And there are spiders who can tap dance.

QUINN

Again...not very helpful

CATERPILLAR

And of course there is my mushroom.

CORDELIA

What's so special about your mushroom?

CATERPILLAR

That's for you to find out. Take a piece of mushroom from over there.

(indicates that QUINN should take from one side)

And you—take a piece from over there.

(CATERPILLAR indicates that CORDELIA should take from the other side. Both CORDELIA and QUINN do and hold out their mushrooms.)

QUINN

What do we do with it?

CATERPILLAR

Experiment with it! See what it does. Find out if it can help solve your little dilemma.

QUINN

Can't you just tell us what it does?

CATERPILLAR

Well that wouldn't be any fun, now would it?

CORDELIA

But how will we know if we're doing it right?

CATERPILLAR

When doing one thing makes you feel blue, then you know it's time to try something new.

(looks at bubble wand)

Take my bubbles for instance.

QUINN

Alright.

(reaches for the bubble wand)

CATERPILLAR

I didn't mean for you to actually take it!

QUINN

Oh, sorry.

CATERPILLAR

I only meant that I am rather bored of blowing bubbles. I have a mind to try something new.

CORDELIA

Like what?

CATERPILLAR

I hear over in India they have the most marvelous invention called the hookah. I have a mind to travel there one day and give it a try.

QUINN

But how will you get there?

CATERPILLAR

Oh, I'm sure I'll figure something out. Perhaps I'll sprout some wings and fly there.

CORDELIA

I should think you would, seeing as you're a caterpillar.

CATERPILLAR

What's that supposed to mean?

CORDELIA

I only mean that someday you'll be a butterfly.

CATERPILLAR

And maybe someday you'll be the Queen of Wonderland! But until that day I shall sit here, blowing bubbles.

(blows bubbles)

CATERPILLAR

Now, I've given you my mushroom and quite a lot of advice. It's time you were on your way.

QUINN

Why don't we take these back to my house and experiment? It's just up the lane.

CORDELIA

Yes, let's.

(turns to CATERPILLAR)

Thank you, Mr. Caterpillar.

(CORDELIA and QUINN start to exit.)

CATERPILLAR

You're welcome Cordelia....if that is who you are. You arrived out of nowhere, you came from afar. Will you always be Cordelia? No one here knows. Perhaps who you are changes as the wind blows.

(CATERPILLAR blows bubbles as lights fade to black.)

ACT I
Scene Five

AT RISE: Outside QUINN'S home. There is a long table with a tablecloth in the front yard with chairs around it. A tiered plate with the crumbs and remnants of a tea party are present as are two empty cups and saucers. There are various hats on the table. CORDELIA is seated at one end of the table. QUINN is at the other end, experimenting with the mushroom.

QUINN

Maybe if we grind up the mushroom into a paste and smear it around, the Jabberwock will slip and bump his head.

CORDELIA

And then what?

QUINN

And then we capture it!

CORDELIA

And do what with it? It's a giant dragon-like creature with a fish-like head, antennae and talons.

QUINN

I can see where that might prove difficult.

CORDELIA

What else do we have?

QUINN

Well we know the mushroom can't be fashioned into a net. It wouldn't hold.

CORDELIA

(chuckles)

You really need to let go of this net idea, Quinn.

QUINN

What can I say? I'm a hatter! I sew together various fabrics and textiles.

QUINN (Cont.)

(picks up a hat)

I make delicate netting so a lady can feel a sense of mystery or to decorate an otherwise plain brim. It's what I know.

CORDELIA

I think we're going to have to think outside your skills as a hatter.

QUINN

Alright.

(pokes the mushroom)

The mushroom is squishy. Maybe we can bounce the Jabberwock out of Wonderland.

CORDELIA

(with a withering look)

Now you're just being ridiculous.

QUINN

There's nothing wrong with being ridiculous. In Wonderland it's practically a rule!

CORDELIA

Yes, well, ridiculousness isn't particularly helpful at the moment.

QUINN

Do you have any ideas?

CORDELIA

I've had ideas! You've had ideas. None of them work. We've been at this for days and days!

(thinks)

Or at least I think it's been days and days. It's hard to keep track of time in this place.

QUINN

To me it feels like you've been here forever.

CORDELIA

And yet somehow, no time at all.

(They share a long look. Then CORDELIA snaps out of it.)

I don't know if I have any ideas left in me. I'm exhausted. I'm hungry. I'm thirsty.

(picks up an empty teacup and turns it upside down)

QUINN

I can get you more tea.

(picks up the tea pot)

CORDELIA

I don't want tea. I want a solution!

(falls down onto the table, exhausted)

QUINN

Well, I don't have one of those yet. But I do have tea.

(puts down the pot and picks up his mushroom piece and smirks)

And if you're hungry you can always eat your mushroom.

CORDELIA

(suddenly sits up straight)

That's it!

QUINN

You do want tea after all?

(picks up a pot)

It'll just take me a few minutes to brew up another pot.

(turns to exit)

CORDELIA

No. I just thought of something we haven't tried.

QUINN

What's that?

CORDELIA

(stands, holding out her mushroom)

The caterpillar made it sound like his mushroom was the answer we've been looking for, but he didn't tell us how to use it. Maybe that's because we're not supposed to *use* it.

QUINN

Then why would he suggest it? That's a terrible waste of perfectly good mushroom.

CORDELIA

He didn't want his mushroom to be used. He wanted it to be eaten!

QUINN

Oh, no, sorry. I don't eat mushrooms. They grow in the ground, surrounded by....well....you know.

CORDELIA

Perhaps it's not you who has to eat the mushroom.

QUINN

Are you saying that if the Jabberwock eats the mushroom, then we can defeat it?

CORDELIA

There's only one way to find out.

(CORDELIA brings the mushroom to her mouth, but QUINN stops her.)

QUINN

Wait! We don't know what the mushroom would do to you. You can just stroll around Wonderland, eating things and waiting for something to happen. That would be madness!

CORDELIA

You're right. We need to find a test subject if we don't want to risk eating the mushroom ourselves.

(CORDELIA looks around. CHESHIRE CAT suddenly appears.)

CHESHIRE CAT

It is usually the second mouse that gets the cheese.

CORDELIA

Cheshire Cat! You're back!

CHESHIRE CAT

I'm not back. I'm here. One cannot be back if he never left.

CORDELIA

But you did leave. Didn't you? Or at least I haven't seen you since...
(thinks, doesn't remember)

Well, since whenever I last saw you.

CHESHIRE CAT

I've been around. I'm always around. Now tell me, what is this cheese you are looking for?

CORDELIA

We're not looking for a cheese. We're looking for a test subject.
(starts looking around)

Something small. Something inconsequential. A nuisance of sorts.

CHESHIRE CAT

To a cat there is one nuisance that is the most nuisance-ist of all.

CORDELIA and QUINN

A mouse!

QUINN

(points behind table)

I think I see one over there! And he looks hungry.

CORDELIA

(holds up her mushroom)

But which part of the mushroom should we give him?

CHESHIRE CAT

It seems that no matter which mushroom he eats you'll have learned something from trying.

QUINN

I suppose that's true. Let's start with mine.

(QUINN bends down behind the table to feed the mouse a bit of his mushroom. The mouse falls to the ground behind the table. Perhaps there is a flash of light and out springs the fully grown DORMOUSE in its place.)

DORMOUSE

So this is what it looks like from the top of the table!

CORDELIA and QUINN

Ahhh!

DORMOUSE

What?

CORDELIA

You're enormous!

DORMOUSE

Who are you calling enormous? I'll have you know I'm very well proportioned for my size.

CORDELIA

Oh, I didn't mean—

DORMOUSE

(looks down at himself)

Ahhh!

CORDELIA and QUINN and CHESHIRE CAT

What?

DORMOUSE

I'm naked!

QUINN

I can help with that.

(puts a hat on DORMOUSE'S head)

DORMOUSE

Thank you.

CHESHIRE CAT

And here I thought you were exclaiming because you saw a cat.

DORMOUSE

(looking around, worried)

A cat? Where?

CHESHIRE CAT

(suddenly behind DORMOUSE)

Right here!

DORMOUSE

Ahhh!

(There is a cat and mouse chase between CHESHIRE CAT and DORMOUSE. Perhaps various parts of CHESHIRE CAT appear and disappear to torment DORMOUSE in a humorous way.)

CORDELIA

(annoyed)

Cat, would you stop tormenting that poor mouse?

CHESHIRE CAT

Aw, don't be mad. I was only trying to have a little fun.

QUINN

Now is not the time for fun. We have work to do.

CHESHIRE CAT

Very well.

(perhaps starting to disappear)

One moment I'm here and the next I'm...gone.

(CHESHIRE CAT exits. Perhaps "gone" is said from offstage.)

DORMOUSE

That was close.

CORDELIA

Oh, I don't think the cat had any intentions of harming you.

DORMOUSE

All the same, I think I'll be on my way.

(tips his hat)

Good day.

(DORMOUSE starts to exit. During the next few lines TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM enter and stand, with an arm around the other, ideally unseen by all, including audience.)

QUINN

Wait a minute! We haven't finished our experiments!

CORDELIA

Aren't you happy being big?

DORMOUSE

That's besides the point. Now, if you'll excuse me.

(DORMOUSE turns and starts to exit towards TWEEDLE DEE and TWEEDLE DUM. When he sees them, he stops abruptly.)

Oh, hello. Where did you come from?

TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM

Who?

DORMOUSE

You! Were they always here?

QUINN

No, but they have a habit of showing up unannounced.

CORDELIA

Who are they?

QUINN

My neighbors. The Tweedles.

TWEEDLE-DUM

(pointing to TWEEDLE-DEE)

He's Tweedle-dee.

TWEEDLE-DEE

(pointing to TWEEDLE-DUM)

And he's Tweedle-dum.

TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM

We're twins.

CORDELIA

Are they always *intertwined* like that?

TWEEDLE-DUM

No. Sometimes we bounce.

(TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLEDUM unlink arms and bounce up and down in a rhythm. Perhaps there is a bouncy noise.)

TWEEDLE-DEE

And sometimes we dance.

(TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLEDUM link arms and dance around in a circle. Perhaps there is music.)

CORDELIA

How...interesting.

DORMOUSE

So is that all you do? You dance and bounce?

TWEEDLE-DEE

Oh, no.

TWEEDLE-DUM

There's something else we do.

TWEEDLE-DEE

Something we do every single day.

TWEEDLE-DUM

When the time reaches four o'clock.

CORDELIA

What's that?

QUINN

Trust me, you don't want to know.

TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM

It's time to fight!

(TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM face one another and put up their fists, circling one another.)

CORDELIA

They're not going to fight right now, are they?

TWEEDLE-DEE

(to TWEEDLE-DUM)

Did you bring your neck bolster?

CORDELIA

Why would you need that?

TWEEDLE-DUM

So I don't get my head cut off in the battle.

TWEEDLE-DEE

It's one of the most serious things that can possibly happen to one in a battle—to get one's head cut off.

CORDELIA

I guess so!

TWEEDLE-DUM

And no, I forgot it at home. I guess we can't fight now.

CORDELIA

Good, because we really ought to get back to work.

QUINN

Right.

(crosses back to the table)

We already know my side of the mushroom made our subject grow large.

(gets an idea)

Maybe we could eat it and grow larger and fight the Jabberwock.

CORDELIA

We'd still have his scaly wings and sharp talons to contend with.

QUINN

That's true.

CORDELIA

(looks at her mushroom excitedly)

But if we could make the Jabberwock smaller....

QUINN

Then we could easily capture him and Wonderland would be saved!

CORDELIA

And we wouldn't have to chop off his head.

QUINN

(takes CORDELIA's mushroom)

But how do we know that your side of the mushroom would make the Jabberwock grow smaller?

CORDELIA

There's only one way to find out.

(grabs her mushroom and turns to DORMOUSE)

DORMOUSE

Oh no. Don't look at me like that.

(DORMOUSE backs away, towards table which he sits at.)

CORDELIA

Let's give the Dormouse a bit of my mushroom and see if it will make him grow small again!

DORMOUSE

No thank you. I only just grew to this size. I do not wish to be small again.

CORDELIA

Then who shall try it out for us?

(CORDELIA and QUINN look around and see TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM., who each point at one another.)

TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM

He will.

QUINN

Being twins and all, the Tweedles *would* make excellent text subjects.

CORDELIA

Good thinking!

(turns to TWEEDLES, holding mushroom and calls out sweetly)

Oh, boys...

TWEEDLE-DEE

That's us.

TWEEDLE-DUM

That's we.

CORDELIA

Who wants a treat?

TWEEDLE-DEE

He does.

(pointing at one another)

TWEEDLE-DUM

He does.

I does.

(pointing at themselves)

I does.

We do.

(crossing their arms and pointing)

We do.

QUINN

Wonderful. Have a seat.

(QUINN pulls out two chairs, one on either side of DORMOUSE, which the TWEEDLES sit on.)

DORMOUSE

Don't you have anything for me to eat?

QUINN

There might be a bit of cheese from my sandwich on the ground.

CORDELIA

Quinn!

QUINN

What? He's a mouse! He's used to eating off the floor.

DORMOUSE

Especially if it's cheese!

(DORMOUSE gets off the chair and kneels on the floor, unseen as CORDELIA gives each TWEEDLE a bit of mushroom. During the next few lines, DELILAH and JUDE enter and listen, unseen.)

CORDELIA

And here's a treat for you!

TWEEDLE-DEE and TWEEDLE-DUM

Yum!

(They link arms and attempt to feed one another their pieces of mushroom. As they lean in they bump heads and drop their mushroom piece. There is a flash of light. The TWEEDLES look down then TWEEDLE-DUM bends down and picks up a tiny hat.)

TWEEDLE-DEE

It looks like the mouse ate our treats.

(TWEEDLE-DEE puts the tiny hat on TWEEDLE-DUM as CORDELIA and QUINN look at one another excitedly.)

CORDELIA and QUINN

It worked!

(They rush to embrace one another.)

TWEEDLE-DEE

They're hugging.

TWEEDLE-DUM

Hugging is fun.

(CORDELIA and QUINN look at TWEEDLES then break apart.)

QUINN

Would you two go home already?

TWEEDLE-DEE

He will.

I will.

We will.

TWEEDLE-DUM

(pointing at one another)

(pointing at themselves)

He will.

I will.

We will.

(They link arms and exit, maybe bouncing as they do.)

CORDELIA

Quick! Give the Dormouse some of your mushroom.

(QUINN bends down behind the table to feed the mouse a bit of his mushroom. The mouse falls to the ground behind the table. Perhaps there is a flash of light and out springs the fully grown DORMOUSE in its place.)

DORMOUSE

It gets quite tiresome, you know...all this growing larger and smaller.

(DORMOUSE grabs another hat off the table and exits in a huff. CORDELIA and QUINN turn to one another.)

QUINN

I can't believe it worked!

CORDELIA

Now all we have to do is give the Jabberwock some of your mushroom! He'll shrink down so small that he'll be easy to capture.

QUINN

Then he won't be able to torment Wonderland ever again!

CORDELIA

And we'll win the King's prize!

QUINN

(taking CORDELIA'S hand, overcome with emotion)

I feel like maybe I've already won the greatest prize there is.

CORDELIA

Quinn—

QUINN

I've spent so much time sitting alone in my shop, making hats and pushing everyone away. I don't want to be alone anymore Cordelia. I want to be with you.

CORDELIA

What are you saying?

QUINN

I'm saying I want to give you my heart! And I want you to give me yours. Forever.

CORDELIA

As in...you want to marry me?

QUINN

(gets down on one knee and takes off his hat)

If you'll have me.

CORDELIA

I...I have to think about this, Quinn. I never wanted to be someone's wife. I want a life of adventure. And I can't...I can't risk getting hurt.

QUINN

What's an adventure without taking risks?

(smiles and stands)

But if you need some time to think it over, I understand.

CORDELIA

Thank you. And I promise, I will think it over. For now let's put this mushroom to good use and win the King's prize.

QUINN

(takes her hand, perhaps kisses it)

Alright. Let's go find that Jabberwock!

(QUINN grabs a teapot and he and CORDELIA exit hurriedly hand in hand as DELILAH and JUDE step out of the shadows.)

JUDE

Did you see that? They've found a mushroom that can shrink the Jabberwock! Quinn and Cordelia are going to win a place in the Court of Hearts for sure.

DELILAH

Not if I have anything to say about it.

JUDE

(pulls out the vorpal sword)

You and I both know this vorpal sword doesn't stand a chance against that beast.

DELILAH

That may be true, but there's more than one way to get into the King's Court. While you were mesmerized by the mushroom, I saw something else that was far more interesting. It seems our favorite hatter and the mysterious newcomer have found something more than a solution to the Jabberwock problem.

JUDE

What did they find?

DELILAH

Love, you idiot! Didn't you hear Quinn? He wants to give her his heart.

JUDE

Aw, that's sweet!

DELILAH

It's not sweet, it's useful. If Cordelia rejects the hatter, then you and I can move in and take his place in court.

JUDE

But why would she do that? Doesn't she love him back?

DELILAH

Of course she does! That is, until we convince her it was all just a cruel trick. Because once you and I are through with them, all the King's horses and all the King's men will never be able to put Cordelia's broken heart back together again!

(DELILAH and JUDE laugh menacingly as lights fade to black.)

ACT I
Scene Six

AT RISE:

The village, as before. WONDERLANDIANS including MARCH HARE, DODO, BILL, MOCK TURTLE, and HUMPTY DUMPTY are present. Additional WONDERLANDIAN lines can be distributed as you see fit. JABBERWOCK noises are heard. ALL are scared.

MARCH HARE

Oh, this won't do. This won't do at all!

MOCK TURTLE

The Jabberwock is whiffling through the tulgey wood, and it is mad!

DODO

So, so mad!

WONDERLANDIAN

It has eyes of flame!

WONDERLANDIAN

Jaws that bite!

WONDERLANIAN

Claws that catch!

WONDERLANDIAN

And it's burbling as it comes!

BILL

There's going to be nothing left to fix when the Jabberwock is through with his reign of terror!

HUMPTY DUMPTY

There's going to be nothing left of me! Did I mention that I'm breakable?

ALL (except HUMPTY DUMPTY)

Yes!

(JABBERWOCK lets out a particularly terrible noise and enters.)

BILL

It's here!

ALL

Beware the Jabberwock!

MOCK TURTLE

Hide!

(All hide as DELILAH and JUDE enter. JUDE holds up the vorpal sword. JABBERWOCK lets out another terrifying noise and makes its way through the village.)

DELILAH

(scared)

Alright, Jude. Go on. Do it.

JUDE

Do what?

DELILAH

Chop off its head with the vorpal sword!

JUDE

Do you see the size of that thing?

DELILAH

Yes I do. That's why you need to kill it.

JUDE

I don't think this is such a good idea.

DELILAH

Do you want a place in the Court of Hearts or not?

JUDE

Yes...no....maybe?

DELILAH

Well I do, so get out and win us that prize!

JUDE

But...I don't know how!

DELILAH

It's a sword, you idiot. Just swing it at the beast.

(JUDE does a half-hearted swing. It's comical.)

DELILAH

Not like that! At its head! You've got to chop off its head! Snicker snack!

(JUDE does another ineffective swing. JABBERWOCK charges at him. JUDE runs to DELILAH.)

JUDE

Ahhh! Now I've really made it mad!

DELILAH

What are you running at me for? The Jabberwock is over there!

JUDE

(handing her the sword)

You try! It's not as easy as it looks.

DELILAH

Fine. I'll do it myself.

(DELILAH crosses to the JABBERWOCK with the sword raised. She and the JABBERWOCK circle one another. CORDELIA and QUINN enter. CORDELIA holds a large mushroom piece. QUINN holds a teapot. During the next couple of lines they strike out at one another, fighting.)

CORDELIA

Look, it's Delilah!

QUINN

And she's got the vorpal sword!

CORDELIA

It looks like we're just in time! We've got to feed it the mushroom before Delilah kills it!

QUINN

But how are we going to do that?

CORDELIA

I don't know, exactly. We just need to find our moment.

(splits the mushroom in half and gives it to QUINN)

Here, take this. And when you see an opportunity, throw it into the Jabberwock's mouth. I'll do the same.

QUINN

No, give me both halves. I don't want to risk you getting hurt.

CORDELIA

I came to Wonderland looking for adventure. And what's an adventure without taking risks?

(smiles at QUINN)

QUINN

Alright. But be careful!

(QUINN and CORDELIA split up and flank the JABBERWOCK.)

DELILAH

(swinging the sword)

Enough is enough, Jabberwock. One, two! One, two! And through and through!

(raises the sword high)

Off with your head!

CORDELIA

No!

(DELILAH hears CORDELIA and turns, distracted. The JABBERWOCK swipes at her sword, which she drops)

DELILAH

(falls, clutching her hand in pain)

Ah!

CORDELIA

Delilah!

(JABBERWOCK turns at the sound of CORDELIA'S voice and starts advancing on her over the next couple of lines. She walks backwards towards offstage.)

QUINN

Cordelia—the Jabberwock! It's coming right for you!

CORDELIA

(holding out the mushroom)

Are you hungry, Jabberwock? Do you need something to eat? Is that why you're so angry?

DELILAH

Don't be a fool, Cordelia. Run!

CORDELIA

Come and get it, big guy! I've got a nice, tasty mushroom for you right here.

(CORDELIA and the JABBERWOCK turn in a slow circle, so that the JABBERWOCK is now close to offstage. It opens its mouth and lets out a terrible noise.)

QUINN

Now, Cordelia! Now!

(CORDELIA throws the mushroom into its mouth, perhaps there is a lighting change. JABBERWOCK lets out a loud roar and CORDELIA falls. Then suddenly the JABBERWOCK is gone.)

Cordelia!

(QUINN runs to CORDELIA'S side.)

Cordelia, are you alright?

CORDELIA

(sitting up slowly)

(looks around)

I'm...okay.

Did...did it work?

DELILAH

(to JUDE)

(JUDE rushes over to where the JABBERWOCK stood and picks up a tiny version.)

JUDE

Aw! Aren't you cute?

(acts as if it nips at him, shaking his hand in pain)

Ouch! It bit me!

QUINN

I'd say so!

(stands and crosses to JUDE)

Give that to me.

(snatches the Jabberwock and puts it in his teapot)

Trying to steal our win, like you stole that apple, Jude?

JUDE

I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

(JUDE crosses to help DELILAH up as all WONDERLANDIANS emerge from their hiding places and CORDELIA stands.)

BILL

Is that it? Is the Jabberwock dead?

CORDELIA

No.

(ALL WONDERLANDIANS gasp.)

QUINN

But don't worry. He won't be bothering Wonderland anymore.

(pats the teapot)

MOCK TURTLE

He's in there? But how?

CORDELIA

We found a mushroom that can make you bigger or smaller if you eat it.

QUINN

The caterpillar told us about it.

CORDELIA

And we figured a smaller Jabberwocky would be a lot easier to manage.

DODO

So-so much easier!

HUMPTY DUMPTY

The Jabberwock's reign of terror has been broken!

MARCH HARE

And it's all thanks to Cordelia and Quinn!

ALL WONDERLANDIANS

O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!

(CHESHIRE CAT appears.)

CHESHIRE CAT

Callooh, Calley, indeed.

CORDELIA

(jumps, then sees CAT)

Cat! You're back!

CHESHIRE CAT

I'm not the only one.

(The sound of trumpeting horns is heard.)

CORDELIA

It's the White Rabbit!

QUINN

The King is coming!

(WONDERLANDIANS surround QUINN and CORDELIA, congratulating them.)

JUDE

Great. Now Quinn and Cordelia will take their places in the Court of Hearts.

DELILAH

They haven't won yet. I still have a few cards I can play.

(DELILAH crosses to the group and grabs QUINN by the arm, taking him to a place outside the group.)

QUINN

What do you want, Delilah?

DELILAH

I wanted to congratulate you on your spectacular victory.

QUINN

I'm just happy Wonderland is safe once more.

DELILAH

That's not the only thing you're happy about, is it?

(indicates CORDELIA)

QUINN

She is amazing, isn't she? I would be the happiest hatter in Wonderland if she would agree to marry me.

DELILAH

(leaning in)

Between you and I, I have it on good authority that she will.

QUINN

Really?

DELILAH

Oh, yes. She's quite anxious to give you your answer, only she doesn't want to give it here.

QUINN

Where does she want to give it?

DELILAH

Somewhere quiet. Secluded. Somewhere that's special to the two of you. A place where you realized your feelings for one another?

QUINN

Like...like the forest by the caterpillar's mushroom?

DELILAH

Maybe. Although it might be nice to celebrate after...perhaps with some tea and cakes...

QUINN

Like my cottage! I can setup a lovely tea party for the two of us!

(thinks, anxious)

Only...that will take some time to put together.

DELILAH

Why don't you go on ahead and get started?

(takes the teapot from QUINN)

I'll give this to Cordelia and send her to your cottage once the King's ceremony is done.

QUINN

That would be great. Thank you Delilah.

(starts to exit; CORDELIA notices)

CORDELIA

Quinn?

DELILAH

You'd better hurry. There's no time to waste!

QUINN

(turns back and smiles)

If you knew time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting it.

(QUINN exits. The sound of the trumpet is heard again and WHITE RABBIT enters. He crosses to the platform and stands on it and blows into his trumpet again.)

WHITE RABBIT

Here ye! Here ye! 'Tis time. 'Tis time!

(CORDELIA and JUDE cross to DELILAH.)

CORDELIA

Where did Quinn go? And why do you have that teapot?

DELILAH

I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this Cordelia, but Quinn doesn't love you anymore. He said he made a mistake...got caught up in a moment...but now that the Jabberwock's taken care of he's realized that his feelings for you weren't real. He just wants to make hats and be left alone.

CORDELIA

(hurt)

How could he!

(WHITE RABBIT blows into his trumpet again. GRYPHON enters, marching, followed by KING OF HEARTS. ALL except CORDELIA, DELILAH and JUDE wave and cheer. As they reach the platform, GRYPHON stands to one side and KING steps on the platform. WHITE RABBIT stands to the other side and addresses the crowd.)

WHITE RABBIT

All hail the King of Hearts who graces us with his presence. Today he has a proclamation regarding the Jabberwock.

(WONDERLANDIANS turn to one another in excitement and fear, ad-libbing lines such as "How exciting!", "The Jabberwock!", "Hurray for Cordelia and Quinn!" etc.)

KING

Thank you citizens of Wonderland for you continued bravery and courage in the face of the dreadful enemy known as the Jabberwock.

(ALL applaud. KING starts to step down but is stopped by GRYPHON.)

GRYPHON

Not yet, not yet! You definitely have more to say, your Highness.

KING

Oh, yes, that's right.

KING (Cont.)

(steps back onto the platform)

Today we celebrate the victory that was achieved over our common enemy. Two brave teams set out to vanquish our foe and one succeeded. Would our victors please come stand before me?

DELILAH

(holds out the teapot to CORDELIA)

Here you go, Cordelia. Claim your prize.

(CORDELIA looks at the pot for moment, then grabs DELILAH's and JUDE'S hands, with anger and determination.)

CORDELIA

We'll all go.

(CORDELIA, JUDE and DELILAH cross to stand before KING.)

KING

Well, this is a surprise. There are three of you now?

CORDELIA

That's right.

KING

And how did you defeat the Jabberwock?

CORDELIA

We shrunk him with the help of a mushroom. He's inside this teapot.

(hands the teapot to GRYPHON who opens it, looks inside and shows KING, who chuckles)

KING

Why yes, he surely is! Then I suppose the only thing left to do is to award you your prize.

(suddenly looks worried)

GRYPHON

What is it, Your Highness?

KING

I only planned on bestowing two positions in the Court of Hearts but there are three standing before me.

WHITE RABBIT

That's quite a problem.

CHESHIRE CAT

A problem's only a problem until you solve it.

KING

Too right!

(indicates to GRYPHON and WHITE RABBIT to bring up DELILAH and JUDE, who stand together on one side of him.)

Delilah and Jude, I now proclaim that you each have a place in the Court of Hearts. Henceforth Delilah will be known as the Duchess and Jude will be known as the Knave of Hearts.

(ALL WONDERLANDIANS applaud and cheer. Perhaps they say “Callooh! Callay!” or “here, here!, etc.)

MARCH HARE

But what about Cordelia?

KING

Oh, I have a very special place in court for Cordelia.

(KING holds out his hand, which CORDELIA takes. She crosses to stand next to him)

Wonderland has gone far too long with only a king. It's time Wonderland had a queen. Cordelia has displayed intelligence, bravery, compassion and grace in her quest to save us from the Jabberwock, which is why I can't think of anyone better to stand my side and lead this great land. Today I proclaim that henceforth Cordelia shall be known as the Queen of Hearts—

(turns to CORDELIA and smiles)

If she'll have me that is?

(The crowd gasps in shock, as do DELILAH and JUDE.)

WONDERLANDIANS

Long live the queen! Long live the queen!

(CHESHIRE CAT is suddenly behind CORDELIA.)

CHESHIRE CAT

Well, Cordelia? What's it going to be? Are you going to chase after the Hatter? Or look for adventure on your own? Or will you marry the king and become the Queen of Hearts?

(CORDELIA looks at the CHESHIRE CAT for a beat then turns and steps forward, addressing the crowd.)

CORDELIA

(coldly)

Long live the queen.

(Blackout. End of Act One.)

ACT II
Scene One

AT RISE: The Court of Hearts, ten years later. Two thrones on a raised platform center. Banners with hearts are present as is other royal décor. Alternately, this scene could take place on the palace grounds. DELILAH and JUDE are seated on the thrones, now wearing royal garb reflective of their positions as Duchess and Knave of Hearts. They are playing cards.

JUDE
(choosing a card, looks at it, then discards)

Your turn.

(DELILAH picks up the card he discarded and slides it into her hand, then lays down or shows her hand.)

DELILAH

I win! And the moral of that is—The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours.

JUDE

How fond you are of finding morals in things these days.

DELILAH

Tut, tut. Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it, Knave.

JUDE

Would you stop calling me that? We've known each other forever. Call me Jude.

DELILAH

I will not. It's been nearly ten years since Cordelia became the Queen of Hearts and we joined her court. We earned these titles fair and square.

JUDE

I don't know about that...Delilah

DELILAH

Call me Duchess! We must use our titles at all times. And the moral of that is—Be what you would seem to be—or if you'd like it put more simply—Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.

JUDE

That makes no sense.

DELILAH

Sure it does, in its own way. Or in Wonderland's way, which these days is more non-sensical than ever.

JUDE

It is, isn't it? Ever since Cordelia became Queen, it seems.

DELILAH

Indeed. She was mad...I don't recall why...my memory isn't what it once was.

JUDE

Nor any of ours anymore.

DELILAH

But Cordelia was mad, then became queen, then went mad and then Wonderland became madder and madder...

JUDE

And the queen got madder and madder...always shouting, "off with their heads" which is funny, since she was so against us beheading the Jabberwock with our vorpal sword ten years ago.

DELILAH

Speaking of which, we must finalize the King and Queen's ten year anniversary celebration or we're going to lose *our* heads!

JUDE

We have the croquet game. And the yearly viewing of the tiny Jabberwock—its tradition. But that's it.

DELILAH

Croquet and the Jabberwock? That won't last an hour! The Queen will have our heads for sure.

JUDE

What else is new?

DELILAH

I'm sick and tired of the queen's ill-temper and constant threats. This throne should belong to me, not some random girl who fell into Wonderland purely by chance.

JUDE

Too bad there's nothing that we can do about it. At least we have a place in the Court of Hearts.

DELILAH

Well we won't have out places for long if we don't come up some plans for the celebration.

JUDE

Well I did have another idea...

DELILAH

Out with it then!

JUDE

How about a tea party?

(CORDELIA enters, now the Queen of Hearts, followed by CARD GUARDS and GRYPHON, who holds an executioner's blade.)

CORDELIA

A tea party! Off with his head!

(DELILAH and JUDE jump up quickly from the thrones.)

JUDE

You majesty, please forgive me! It was only an idea.

CORDELIA

You know how I feel about tea parties, Knave.

JUDE

Yes of course, Your Majesty. My mistake. What was I thinking? I must've lost my head for a moment.

CORDELIA

You will lose your head for good if you bring up the idea of a tea party one more time.

(GRYPHON swings his blade and JUDE jumps back.)

JUDE

It won't happen again. I promise.

CORDELIA

How is the banquet coming along, Duchess?

DELILAH

I have asked my cook to prepare a few dishes for us to sample.

JUDE

And I told the baker to whip up some tarts for the occasion. I know how much you love tarts.

CORDELIA

I do love tarts, but unfortunately the baker thought it would be wise to make an apple cake instead of chocolate for dessert last night. Everyone knows I'm not eating apples this week. So she is no longer with us.

DELILAH

Has she been...beheaded?

CORDELIA

For serving apple cake? Good gracious, no. Do you think I'm a monster?

DELILAH

No, of course not! I only meant—

CORDELIA

The baker is down in the dungeon awaiting her sentence. Her beheading is next week, which is why I will make the tarts for the ten year anniversary celebration myself.

JUDE

A wise decision, Your Majesty. I'm sure the tarts will be delicious.

(CORDELIA sits on throne. CARD GUARDS flank her.)

CORDELIA

Now, what are these dishes your cook has prepared for us to sample today?

DELILAH

I believe we have a roast leg of rabbit and a nice rabbit stew.

CORDELIA

Very well. Not overly peppered this time, I hope? You know how I abhor pepper.

DELILAH

(worried)

I...I don't think so.

CORDELIA

Because you know what will happen if it is?

(GRYPHON taps or swings his blade.)

DELILAH

Yes. Of course.

(calls offstage)

Footmen!

(FROG and FISH enter, sneezing, each in footman attire and carrying a tray of food, which they present.)

FROG

Your Majesty, I have here a roasted leg of rabbit with a side of root vegetables and a creamy polenta.

(sneezes)

FISH

And I have a nice rabbit stew, which has been simmering for twelve hours with garlic, herbs, and spices.

(sneezes.)

CORDELIA

Would any of those spices happen to be pepper, Mr. Footman?

(FISH looks at DELILAH, who shakes her head “no.”)

FISH

Um...no. Why would you think that?

(FISH sneezes. CORDELIA turns to FROG)

CORDELIA

And you—is that polenta plentifully peppered?

(FROG looks at DELIAH, who waves her hands, indicating, “no.”)

FROG

Of course not.

(sneezes)

CORDELIA

Then why are you sneezing?

FROG

(trying to hold off a sneeze)

I'm naaaahhh...naaaahhh...naaahhh...achoo!

(sneezes loudly)

CORDELIA

Duchess! What is the meaning of this?

DELILAH

(reciting, quickly, so as to distract)

Speak roughly to your little boy

and beat him when he sneezes

he only does it to annoy

because he knows it teases.

I speak severely to my boy

I beat him when he sneezes

for he can thoroughly enjoy
the pepper when he pleases.

CORDELIA

That means nothing to me. It's utter nonsense.

DELILAH

Do you not like it, Your Majesty?

CORDELIA

It's completely ridiculous. I love it!

DELILAH

Oh, good!

CORDELIA

But these dishes your cook has prepared are awful.

(to FISH)

Why did you bring them to me?

FISH

We were only doing our jobs, Your Majesty.

CORDELIA

And is your job to poison me with pepper?

FISH

No, of course not. I'm a barber.

FROG

And I'm a dentist!

DELILAH

No, you are footmen. You should've always been footmen.

CORDELIA

Now get these dishes out of my sight at once!

FROG and FISH

Yes, Your Majesty.

CORDELIA

And off with their heads!

(GRYPHON crosses to FISH and FROG.)

FROG

Our heads?

CORDELIA

Yes, your heads! In fact, perhaps we will have frog legs and roasted fish for our tenth anniversary celebration instead of the rabbit. Doesn't that sound delightful?

FISH

No...no it does not!

CORDELIA

Be gone!

(GRYPHON exits with FISH and FROG.)

Now, what else do you have for me?

JUDE

Um, well...

(takes off his hat)

You can have my hat if you'd like. Or I can give you my shoes...

CORDELIA

For my celebration, you idiot!

JUDE

Oh, yes, right. Well, we have a croquet match planned for the afternoon.

CORDELIA

That's good. I like croquet. What else?

DELILAH

And of course we will view the tiny Jabberwock.

CORDELIA

Yes, yes, we always do that. But this is our tenth anniversary celebration. We need excitement! Wonder! Something unexpected. Something the people of Wonderland would never see coming.

(stands)

Tell me, do you have something like that?

DELILAH

Well...

(WHITE RABBIT enters, hurriedly and flustered.)

WHITE RABBIT

Oh dear! Oh dear!

CORDELIA

What is it, Rabbit?

WHITE RABBIT

It's all so mad. Mad, mad, mad, mad!

CORDELIA

I'm going to be mad if you don't tell me what's going on.

WHITE RABBIT

Not again! Not again!

CORDELIA

(angrily)

If you don't tell me what it is you are babbling on about, we will most definitely be having rabbit stew at my tenth anniversary celebration after all!

WHITE RABBIT

It's happened again!

ALL

What?

WHITE RABBIT

A girl has followed me down the rabbit hole!

CORDELIA

From where?

WHITE RABBIT

You know where.

CORDELIA

I assure you I don't. Where's where, hare?

WHITE RABBIT

From your home—the place you came from.

CORDELIA

I'm from Wonderland.

WHITE RABBIT

Except when you weren't.

CORDELIA

That makes no sense. It's nonsense.

WHITE RABBIT

Either way it's true.

CORDELIA

Well who is this girl?

WHITE RABBIT

She goes by the name of Alice.

CORDELIA

And what does she want with Wonderland?

WHITE RABBIT

That I do not know. I was simply conducting my patrols outside the rabbit hole and the next thing I knew she had followed me.

CORDELIA

What of our defenses? I thought we had protections to keep Wonderland safe from outsiders.

CARD GUARD

We do, Your Highness.

CARD GUARD

There are the doors.

CARD GUARD

And the key.

CARD GUARD

And the drink, made from the special mushroom which makes one grow smaller.

CARD GUARD

And the cake made from the other side of the mushroom, which makes one grow larger.

WHITE RABBIT

Both very smart inventions on your part, Your Highness.

CORDELIA

Thank you. I am quite brilliant, aren't I?

DELILAH

The most brilliant.

JUDE

So very smart.

WHITE RABBIT

But Alice got past them.

CORDELIA

How?

WHITE RABBIT

I don't know.

CORDELIA

Where is she now?

WHITE RABBIT

I lost her in the woods. The last I saw her she was talking to the caterpillar.

CORDELIA

Oh? Is he back from India already?

WHITE RABBIT

It would appear so.

CORDELIA

This will not do. This will not do at all!

JUDE

Perhaps we can help.

CORDELIA

What can you do? You're nothing but a sniveling little thief.

JUDE

That's hurtful.

DELILAH

I can head home and stall her...get her good and mixed up and send her back to where she came from. Then we can get on with the tenth anniversary celebration as planned.

CORDELIA

Good. Do that. I don't want to hear another word about this Alfred—

WHITE RABBIT

Alice.

CORDELIA

Right. I don't want to hear another word about this Alice being in Wonderland again.

(to WHITE RABBIT)

Now, let us go out into the garden. I want to check on my roses.

WHITE RABBIT

Very well, Your Majesty.

(CORDELIA and WHITE RABBIT exit with CARD GUARDS.)

CORDELIA

I had the most beautiful red roses planted for the celebration. Just wait until you see them!

(CORDELIA exits with WHITE RABBIT.)

CARD GUARD

Did she just say *red* roses?

CARD GUARD

She did! I could've sworn she wanted white roses!

CARD GUARD

Oh this isn't good...this isn't good at all!

CORDELIA

(offstage, angrily)

Guards!

CARD GUARD

I think she knows!

CORDELIA

(offstage)

Off with their heads!

(CARD GUARDS exit hurriedly. DELILAH turns to JUDE.)

DELILAH

Did you hear that?

JUDE

Yeah, those guards are in trouble.

DELILAH

(sits on the throne)

No, the girl! Alice! She just might be what we've been waiting for to stop the Queen's reign of terror and put me on this throne where I belong. And the moral of that is—take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves.

JUDE

But how can a little girl from another world do all that?

DELILAH

I don't know, but we're about to find out.

CORDELIA

(offstage)

Duchess, are you sitting on my throne again? Because if you are, I'm going to have your head!

DELILAH

(jumps up)

Of course not, your highness! Wouldn't dream of it!

(JUDE laughs and DELILAH swats at him as lights fade to black.)

ACT II
Scene Two

AT RISE: Outside QUINN'S home, as before, though the ten years that have passed are by the state of the table and those around it, which include QUINN, DORMOUSE, who is asleep during the entire scene, and MARCH HARE, who is no longer prim and proper, but fully mad.

QUINN

Pass the sugar please.

MARCH HARE
(picks up a fork and holds it out)

Here you are.

QUINN

That's not sugar. That's a fork

MARCH HARE

Too right. Where are my manners? I seem to have lost them years ago, but where I don't know.
(sticks the fork in his ear)

As for sugar, we don't have any. We haven't had any sugar for...oh, what has it been now...three years?

QUINN

Has it been that long? My watch hasn't been working right. I have no idea what month it is.
(taps at his watch)

MARCH HARE

It's been longer than that! It's been so long that I don't know how long the long has been!

DORMOUSE

One year...two...three...four...five...six...

QUINN

Yes, yes, we know, Dormouse. We've been sitting at this table a long time.

DORMOUSE

Seven...eight...nine...ten....good little sleepy, sleepy, sleepy.

MARCH HARE

He's stopped counting years and started counting sheep. Which hardly seems necessary since he never has trouble falling asleep.

QUINN

Ten sheep! I mean years. Has it really been that long?

MARCH HARE

That long since when?

QUINN

Since....

(thinks)

I don't know now. Or I think I might. A girl. There was a girl.

(CHESHIRE CAT suddenly appears.)

CHESHIRE CAT

A girl from another world.

MARCH HARE

That's right! She helped defeat the Jabberjaw!

DORMOUSE

Wock.

MARCH HARE

What?

DORMOUSE

Jabber-wock.

MARCH HARE

Oh. Yes. Right. She made it teeeeeeny teeeeeny tiny.

QUINN

But she made my heart grow big.

When once it was small and cold.

MARCH HARE

What was her name?

QUINN, CHESHIRE CAT and DORMOUSE

Cordelia.

MARCH HARE

Ah, yes, Cordelia. That name means heart, you know.

QUINN

Does it? What name means broken heart? Because that's what I have now that she's gone.

DORMOUSE

Quinn.

QUINN

Quinn means broken heart?

CHESHIRE CAT

No, but maybe it should.

QUINN

It definitely should.

(stands, remembering)

I remember now! She was supposed to meet me here...at this table. To give me my answer...to be my wife. But she never showed up. I sat here and waited.

DORMOUSE

And waited and waited and waited and waited.

QUINN

And she never came.

DORMOUSE

Never, never, never.

QUINN

And now she's gone forever.

CHESHIRE CAT

She isn't though, you know.

QUINN

(interested)

Not gone? Where is she?

CHESHIRE CAT

You've seen her once—when the March Hare came here and told you she had been crowned Queen.

MARCH HARE

You made me wait here for you. And I've never left!

DORMOUSE

Never, never, never!

MARCH HARE

No art, no music, no culture. Just tea! Endless tea!

QUINN

I sang for her.

CHESHIRE CAT

Yes.

QUINN

Sang for the girl from the other world who was now Queen of *all* hearts.... not just mine.

(darkens)

But she had changed. Her heart had grown cold.

DORMOUSE

So so so cold.

QUINN

And she threatened my head and sent me away and here I've been ever since...drinking tea and watching time ticking away.

DORMOUSE

Tick tock. Tick tock.

QUINN

Waiting for my girl from another world.

CHESHIRE CAT

Perhaps she will come again?

QUINN

No. Cordelia is gone.

CHESHIRE CAT

Another one then? Another from her world? A child this time? I've met just such a child only moments ago at the Duchess's house. I think she's coming this way.

QUINN

A child? Where?

(ALICE enters, looking around.)

CHESHIRE CAT

There.

(CHESHIRE CAT indicates ALICE, QUINN turns and stares.)

QUINN

She looks just like my Cordelia.

CHESHIRE CAT

And yet so different.

QUINN

What do I say to her? I'm not myself these days. After all these years of waiting and wondering...I'm...I'm mad.

CHESHIRE CAT

We're all mad here.

QUINN

What should I do?

CHESHIRE CAT

I suppose you could start by inviting her to tea....

(CHESHIRE CAT slowly disappears as QUINN sits.)

MARCH HARE

Here we go again!

(as ALICE approaches)

ALICE

Hello there. I've come a long way and am tired and hungry. Might I join you?

MARCH HARE

No room! No room!

ALICE

There's *plenty* of room!"

(sits down)

MARCH HARE

Have some wine.

ALICE

I don't see any wine.

MARCH HARE

There isn't any.

ALICE

Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it.

MARCH HARE

It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE

I didn't know it was *your* table. It's laid for a great many more than three.

QUINN

(looking up at her quickly, then back down at his cup)

Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE

You should learn not to make personal remarks. It's very rude.

QUINN

Fine. Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

ALICE

Are we asking riddles now? Because I do believe I can guess that one.

MARCH HARE

Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?

ALICE

Exactly so.

MARCH HARE

Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE

I do—at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know.

QUINN

Not the same thing a bit! You might just as well say that “I see what I eat” is the same thing as “I eat what I see!”

MARCH HARE

You might just as well say that “I like what I get” is the same thing as “I get what I like!”

DORMOUSE

You might just as well say that “I breathe when I sleep” is the same thing as “I sleep when I breathe!”

(an awkward pause)

QUINN

What day of the month is it?

ALICE

The fourth.

QUINN

(fidgeting with his pocket watch, to MARCH HARE)

Two days wrong! I told you butter wouldn't suit the watch works!

MARCH HARE

It was the *best* butter.

QUINN

But some crumbs must have got in as well. You shouldn't have put it in with the bread knife.

ALICE

What a funny watch! It tells the day of the month and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!

QUINN

Why should it? Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?

ALICE

Of course not, but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together.

QUINN

Which is just the case with *mine*.

ALICE

I don't quite understand you.

QUINN

The Dormouse is asleep again.

DORMOUSE

Of course, of course...just what I was going to remark myself.

QUINN

Have you guessed the riddle yet?

ALICE

No, I give it up. What's the answer?

QUINN

I haven't the slightest idea.

MARCH HARE

Nor I.

ALICE

I think you might do something better with the time than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.

QUINN

If you knew Time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting it.

(taps his watch)

It's a him—Time. We quarrelled last March—just before *he* went mad, you know—

(pointing with his tea spoon at the MARCH HARE)

It was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing, Twinkle, twinkle, little bat! How I wonder what you're at!" You know the song, perhaps?

ALICE

I've heard something like it.

DORMOUSE

(singing in his sleep)

Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle...

(MARCH HARE pinches DORMOUSE until he stops.)

QUINN

Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse when the Queen jumped up and bawled out, "He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"

ALICE

How dreadfully savage!

QUINN

And ever since that, he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now.

ALICE

Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?

MARCH HARE

No. It's because—

(QUINN nudges MARCH HARE and gives him a stern look, then turns back to ALICE sweetly.)

QUINN

Yes, that's it. It's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between.

ALICE

Then you keep moving round, I suppose?

QUINN

Exactly so, as the things get used up.

ALICE

But what happens when you come to the beginning again?

DORMOUSE

The beginning? There is no beginning. Only the end. The end of Quinn and Cordelia.

(QUINN turns away from the table, upset.)

ALICE

Who's Quinn?

(to QUINN)

Is that you? And who's Cordelia?

MARCH HARE

(quickly)

Suppose we change the subject. I'm getting tired of this.

(picking up a teapot and holding it out to ALICE)

Take some more tea.

ALICE

I've had nothing yet, so I can't take more.

QUINN

You mean you can't take *less*. It's very easy to take *more* than nothing.

(stands)

I want a clean cup. Let's all move one place over.

(They all move one place over as WHITE RABBIT enter, holding an invitation and looking around.)

ALICE

It's the White Rabbit again!

(turns to QUINN)

I fear he's rather cross with me, seeing as earlier I drank a little something from a bottle in his house and grew so large that my head hit the ceiling and my arms and legs were coming out of the windows and chimney!

MARCH HARE

How did you get the right size again?

ALICE

The caterpillar gave me part of his mushroom.

(holds up a mushroom piece, which QUINN snatches)

QUINN

The mushroom!

ALICE

Hey! That's mine.

WHITE RABBIT
(crossing to the table)

I am here to announce that you are requested to attend the Queen's tenth anniversary celebration this very afternoon.

ALICE

Even me?

WHITE RABBIT

I suppose. You are in Wonderland, are you not?

ALICE

It does seem that way.

WHITE RABBIT

The Queen of Hearts has invited everyone in Wonderland, and seeing as you are indeed *in* Wonderland, then I would surmise that you should attend as well.

(exits)

ALICE

(stands)

I suppose I should go to the celebration then. It can't be any stupider than this party. This is the stupidest tea party I ever was at in all my life!

QUINN

Who's making personal remarks now?

ALICE

Well? Are you coming with me to meet the Queen or not?

QUINN

(looks at the mushroom and smiles)

Oh, I'm coming to meet the Queen alright.

(stands and looks at his watch)

The time is now or never!

ALICE

(looks at his watch)

What a funny watch you have.

(QUINN follows ALICE offstage as DORMOUSE rolls over and MARCH HARE puts a teacup on his head. Lights fade to black.)

ACT II
Scene Three

AT RISE: Palace grounds. Rose bushes are present, some with white roses and some with red. CARDS GUARDS 2, 5 and 7 are painting roses red.

CARD GUARD 2

Look out now, Five! Don't go splashing paint over me like that!

CARD GUARD 5

I couldn't help it. Seven jogged my elbow.

CARD GUARD 7

That's right, Five! Always lay the blame on others!

(ALICE and QUINN enter.)

QUINN

Here it is...the palace of the King and Queen of Hearts.

CARD GUARD 5

You'd better not talk! I heard the Queen say only yesterday you deserved to be beheaded!

CARD GUARD 2

What for?

CARD GUARD 7

That's none of *your* business, Two!

ALICE

(seeing CARD GUARDS, stunned)

Are those...playing cards? What are they doing?

QUINN

Well they aren't dancing a jig, I can tell you that for certain.

ALICE

It looks like they're painting the flowers!

CARD GUARD 5

Yes, it *is* his business! And I'll tell him—it was for bringing the cook tulip-roots instead of onions.

CARD GUARD 7

Of all the unjust things—

ALICE

Well I'm going to talk to them.

(crosses to CARD GUARD)

Would you tell me why you are painting those roses?

CARD GUARD 2

Why the fact is, you see, Miss, this here ought to have been a *red* rose-tree, and we put a white one in by mistake; and if the Queen was to find it out, we should all have our heads cut off, you know. So you see, Miss, we're doing our best, afore she comes, to—

(The sound of trumpets are heard.)

CARD GUARD 5

The Queen! The Queen!

(Perhaps WONDERLANDIANS enter to watch the procession. CARD GUARDS throw themselves down flat in the walkway as a procession enters, led by the WHITE RABBIT who blows into a trumpet. Additional CARD GUARDS may be present and walking in formation. They are followed by GRYPHON, who carries his executioner's axe and FISH, who holds a teapot and FROG, who holds a tray of tarts. DELILAH and JUDE are next, followed lastly by CORDELIA and the KING.)

ALICE

Look! It's the King and Queen of Hearts! Just like the playing cards!

QUINN

(to himself)

Cordelia!

(The procession stops in front of ALICE.)

CORDELIA

Who is this?

ALICE

My name is Alice, so please your Majesty.

CORDELIA

(to DELILAH)

So this is the girl? I thought you were going to send her back where she came from.

DELILAH

I tried! She came to my home and I was ready to send her away but the baby was crying and the I couldn't stop sneezing and the Cheshire Cat was grinning and the cook was throwing pans and—

CORDELIA

Off with her head!

DELILAH

Your Highness, please!

KING

My dear it's our anniversary celebration. Perhaps we can hold off on the beheadings for one day.

CORDELIA

Very well.

(turns to QUINN)

And who is this, Knave? Tell me at once.

JUDE

You don't know?

CORDELIA

Of course I know. I only wanted you to tell me.

JUDE

He is the Hatter.

CORDELIA

(softens, something inside of her remembers)

The Hatter. I knew a hatter once. Made the most beautiful hats.

QUINN

Works of art, you called them.

CORDELIA

(more like her old self)

Yes! And you gave me one!

QUINN

Because once I saw it on your head I couldn't imagine it on anyone else's.

CORDELIA

Yes. That's it.

(touches her head, sweetly, smiling)

I wonder where that hat is now.

QUINN

(takes a step toward her)

I could make you another.

CORDELIA

Could you?

(They share a moment.)

DELILAH

Your Highness, we have a croquet game to get to.

(CORDELIA turns, breaking the moment. QUINN steps back.)

CORDELIA

Yes, of course. Let us proceed.

JUDE

There are cards blocking our way.

CORDELIA

Then turn them over!

JUDE

Yes, Your Highness.

(uses his foot to turn them over)

CORDELIA

Get up!

(CARD GUARDS stand, still holding their paintbrushes.)

Ah! So it was you who were painting the roses red?

CARD GUARD 2

May it please your Majesty, we were trying—

CORDELIA

Off with their heads!

GRYPHON

Yes, Your Majesty.

(GRYPHON stands facing forward as the procession, led this time by CORDELIA, moves to the other side of the stage. As GRYPHON waits, ALICE rushes to the three CARD GUARDS, who are looking down sadly.)

ALICE

They can't be beheaded! They just can't!

QUINN

We need to hide them. This way!

(QUINN helps them hide or leads them offstage. When the procession has passed, GRYPHON looks around, then crosses to QUINN and ALICE.)

GRYPHON

Where did they go?

QUINN

I don't know. But I wouldn't let the queen know you lost them.

CORDELIA

Are their heads off?

GRYPHON

Their heads are gone, if it pleases your Majesty!

CORDELIA

Good.

(to ALICE)

Now, tell me Alvin—

ALICE

Alice.

CORDELIA

Whatever. Can you play croquet?

ALICE

Yes.

CORDELIA

Come on, then! Get to your places!

(If there are additional CARD GUARDS, they pair up, kneel and join hands to make the arches. Flamingoes are passed out for mallets and hedgehogs are used for balls. When all have a mallet and ball, WHITE RABBIT blows into his trumpet.)

WHITE RABBIT

Let the croquet game begin!

(ALL start playing at once. It's madness. CORDELIA is stomping around, angry at the game, exclaiming "Off with his head!" or "Off with her head!" here and there. CHESHIRE CAT's head suddenly appears near ALICE, who is standing off to one side, watching.)

CHESHIRE CAT

How do you like the Queen?

(CORDELIA crosses near ALICE, listening.)

ALICE

Not at all. She's so extremely—

(notices CORDELIA and changes her tone)

—likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game.

CORDELIA

Smart girl.

(CORDELIA crosses away and continues to play/exclaim as focus shifts from various couples throughout the next several lines. Lighting and movement can be used. The first shift is to DELILAH and JUDE who are playing near FROG, who holds a tray of tarts.)

JUDE

(looking at the tarts)

Those tarts look good. When do you suppose we will be permitted to eat them?

DELILAH

When the queen commands. Now here, croquet this hedgehog.

(hands JUDE a hedgehog, which he hits while looking at the tarts as focus shifts to WONDERLANDIAN and QUINN)

WONDERLANDIAN

(to QUINN as they play croquet)

It's been some time since I've seen you.

QUINN

Has it been? I haven't seen Time in awhile myself.

(turns and nearly runs into CORDELIA)

Or the girl from the other world.

CORDELIA

Which girl? Alex?

QUINN

No...Cordelia.

CORDELIA

Cordelia....I knew a Cordelia once...

(Focus shifts to KING, ALICE and CHESHIRE CAT.)

KING

Who *are* you talking to?

ALICE

It's a friend of mine—a Cheshire Cat.

KING

I don't like the look of it at all. However, it may kiss my hand if it likes.

CHESHIRE CAT

I'd rather not.

KING

Don't be impertinent, and don't look at me like that!

(calling out to CORDELIA)

My dear! I wish you would have this cat removed!

CORDELIA

Off with his head!

(GRYPHON crosses to stand by KING.)

GRYPHON

But it's only got a head. How can I chop off its head if that's all there is?

KING

That is a good question.

CHESHIRE CAT

Why don't I make it easy on both of you and just be off myself.

(exits or disappears)

ALICE

What an unusual cat.

(Focus shifts to CORDELIA and DELILAH.)

CORDELIA

The girl is talking to the king.

DELILAH

I noticed. What do you suppose she wants?

CORDELIA

My throne, of course!

DELILAH

We can't let that happen.

CORDELIA

No...no we cannot.

(Focus shifts to JUDE and WHITE RABBIT and QUINN.)

JUDE

How much longer until we eat?

WHITE RABBIT

How should I know? I'm a herald, not a time-keeper.

QUINN

Do you know who is keeping Time? Because I expected him half past Thursday.

(Focus shifts to DELILAH and ALICE.)

DELILAH

How glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing!

(links arms with ALICE and rests her chin on ALICE'S shoulder)

ALICE

Must you do that, Duchess? Your chin is quite sharp.

DELILAH

Is it? I never noticed.

ALICE

I should think not.

DELILAH

'Tis so. And the moral of that is—"Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!"

ALICE

Hmmm.

DELILAH

You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk.

ALICE

I was thinking what it might be like when I'm Duchess one day.

DELILAH

(digs her chin in deeper and whispers menacingly in ALICE's ear)

Perhaps you should set your sights higher.

ALICE

Higher than a Duchess. What's higher than a Duchess?

DELILAH

Oh, I don't know...a queen?

(Focus shifts to FROG and FISH. JUDE is nearby)

FROG

I don't like the way the Knave is eying these tarts.

FISH

I find it rather amusing myself. The Knave is a known thief.

FROG

And quite hungry.

FISH

If one wanted this party to get a little more interesting, they might leave their tray of tarts unattended for a few moments.

FROG

Hmmm....that is an idea....

(FROG puts tray down and walks away as focus shifts to QUINN and CORDELIA, who are hitting the ball and walking backwards and bump into one another, unexpectantly.)

QUINN

My apologies, Your Highness.

CORDELIA

You really ought to learn to be more careful, Quinn.

(They stop, remembering.)

QUINN

You remember!

CORDELIA

I don't know.

QUINN

Why didn't you come to me that day?

CORDELIA

What day?

QUINN

The day we defeated the Jabberwock!

(KING overhears.)

KING

Oh, yes, the Jabberwock! Who has the teeeeeny tiiiiny Jabberwock? We must view him.

FROG

(carries teapot)

Here he is!

QUINN

My teapot!

CORDELIA

I've seen that teapot before.

(FROG opens teapot and bows. KING pulls out JABBERWOCK and holds it up. While this is happening JUDE steals a tart and eats it, then fills his pockets with tarts.)

ALL (except QUINN and CORDELIA)

O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!

QUINN

Callooh, Calley, indeed.

(DELILAH sees JUDE and crosses to him.)

DELILAH

What are you doing? You're going to get caught!

(CORDELIA turns, overhearing. The moment between her and QUINN is broken. JUDE puts the empty tray behind his back.)

CORDELIA

Get caught doing what?

DELILAH

(bows, quickly)

A fine day, your Majesty.

CORDELIA

What is behind your back, Knave.

JUDE

Nothing. Only...this.

(slowly brings the empty tray out for her to see)

CORDELIA

Where are my tarts, Knave?

JUDE

(points at ALICE and QUINN)

They took them! Alice and the Mad Hatter!

ALICE

No! That's not true.

CORDELIA

Off with their heads!

(CARD GUARDS cross and take the arms of ALICE and QUINN as KING rushes over.)

KING

Consider, my dear: she is only a child!

CORDELIA

Fine. Then we shall have a trial! What a fun anniversary celebration this has turned out to be. To the Court of Hearts!

(All process out, with the CARD GUARDS and ALICE and QUINN leading the way. DELILAH and JUDE hang back.)

DELILAH

The trial may be for Alice and the Hatter, but in the end, it'll be the queen who loses her head.

JUDE

Fine by me, as long as we keep ours.

DELILAH

And the moral of that is—don't give your enemies the means for your own destruction!

(DELILAH and JUDE laugh and as lights fade to black.)

ACT II
Scene Four

AT RISE:

The Court of Hearts, as before, except a stool or other witness stand is present on one side of the thrones, as well as a few chairs or benches on the other side for the jury. CORDELIA and KING are seated on the thrones. WHITE RABBIT stands on one side of the thrones, with his trumpet and GRYPHON stands on the other side with his blade. DELILAH and JUDE stand off to one side. Seated in the jury are BILL, MOCK TURTLE, HUMPTY DUMPTY, DODO and MARCH HARE. Additional WONDERLANDIANS may also be present. At start of scene CARD GUARDS enter with ALICE and QUINN.

ALICE

I'm innocent. I swear!

QUINN

And I have no sense! I swear to that too.

(ALL stop in front of CORDELIA and KING.)

CARD GUARD

The prisoners are present and ready to stand trial, Your Majesties.

KING

Thank you. Today's trial is entitled, Who Stole The Tarts? It is our task to determine the answer to this question. Herald?

WHITE RABBIT

(blows into his trumpet)

Let the trial begin!

KING

Herald, read the accusation!

WHITE RABBIT

(blows into trumpet, then recites from scroll)

The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts all on a summer day.

The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts and took them quite away!

JUDE

Except he didn't—they did!

(points at ALICE and QUINN)

KING

Jury, consider your verdict.

GRYPHON

Not yet, not yet! There's a great deal to come before that.

KING

Call the first prisoner.

WHITE RABBIT

First prisoner—Mad Hatter!

(CARD GUARDS bring QUINN forward and he takes the stand.)

KING

Take off your hat.

QUINN

It isn't mine.

KING

Stolen!

QUINN

No, not stolen. I keep them to sell. I have no hats of my own. I'm a hatter.

CORDELIA

A hatter. I knew a hatter once. Made the most beautiful hats.

(stands and looks at QUINN closely)

Did you sing for me once?

QUINN

Yes. Twinkle Twinkle Little Bat.

CORDELIA

There was an issue with time I believe.

QUINN

There always is between you and me.

CORDELIA

I didn't behead you?

QUINN

You never do.

KING

Hatter you are here because you spoke out against the queen. What do you have to say for yourself?

QUINN

I'm a poor man, your Majesty, and I hadn't begun my tea and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin—and the twinkling of the tea—

KING

The twinkling of the *what*?

QUINN

It *began* with the tea.

KING

Of course twinkling begins with a T! Do you take me for a dunce? Go on!

QUINN

I'm a poor man, Your Majesty.

KING

(sighs)

You're a very poor speaker.

QUINN

(chuckles)

I am at that.

MOCK TURTLE

He used to go stomping around.

BILL

And yelling.

CORDELIA

But he was a fine hatter.

(to QUINN)

That's true, isn't it? And once you were done stomping and yelling, you were kind.

QUINN

Cordelia made me so.

CORDELIA

Cordelia...

KING

But what of the tarts?

QUINN

We never had any tarts...not at the tea party and not at the croquet match.

KING

Very well. If that's all you know about it, you may stand down.

QUINN

And what of my head? Do I get to keep it?

End of Excerpt.

To read the rest of this play, email tracywellsplaywright@gmail.com