

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Alice in Wonderland

by Les Winspear

EXTRACT

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ALICE IN WONDERLAND

CAST: Alice
White Rabbit
Che-Sha-Puss
Caterpillar
Duchess
Chef
Apprentices x 2
Mad Hatter
March Hare
Dormouse
Umpire
Queen of Hearts
Knave of Hearts
Mock Turtle
Executioner

This play can also be played by five actors taking the following roles:

1. Alice
2. White Rabbit / Apprentice / Mad Hatter
3. Che-Sha-Puss / Chef / March Hare / Knave of Hearts
4. Caterpillar / Apprentice / Dormouse / Queen of Hearts
5. Duchess / Umpire / Mock Turtle / Executioner

ALICE IN WONDERLAND.

ACT I.

ALICE ENTERS CARRYING A PICNIC BASKET AND HER TOY CAT DINAH.
SHE CALLS OFF.

ALICE Come on! Slow coaches. We'll never get there.
 Hurry up. We won't even get the picnic started and it'll be time to go
 home. Then it'll be bath time, then bed time and the whole day will be
 wasted. Come on!

SHE LOOKS OFF.

ALICE No. Leave the daisies. We can do that on the way back. It's lunch time
 now. And I'm starving.

SHE WAITS

How can it take so long to go such a short distance? Oh no, now
they're playing ring-around-the-rosie. It's not play time, it's food time.
Mum! Dad! Oh, parents. Little brothers. I should have left them at
home. It would have been so much easier.

Well that's it, Dinah. They can take as long as they like, we are going
to eat something. Let's see what we've got in here. Cordial, good.
Sardine Sandwiches, yuk!
What's this? Something for afters? Tarts! Yum raspberry tarts. Mum,
you're a genius. One, two, three four- Oh, one each. That won't be
enough. Maybe somebody won't want one. They might be on a sugar-
free diet or something.

SHE TAKES OUT ONE OF THE TARTS AND PUTS THE BASKET AND DINAH
DOWN, OFF TO ONE SIDE.

Well I'm not on a diet. I could eat anything. In fact, I'm going straight
to desserts and no one can stop me.
Mmm, this is going to be delicious.
Past the teeth and over the gums,
Look out stomach, here it comes.

BUT AS SHE BITES INTO THE TART, THE REALITY CHANGES. SHE PASSES
INTO WONDERLAND. GIANT MUSHROOMS SPRING UP OUT OF THE
GROUND. MUSIC STARTS AND WONDERLAND CHARACTERS APPEAR.

ALICE Curious, this is very curious.

DURING THE SONG ONE OF THE CHARACTERS REPLACES HER SMALL TART WITH AN ENORMOUS ONE.

SONG

It could be just a normal day,
You're not that far from home,
You're out to have a picnic
But you find yourself alone.

Then something clicks and something ticks
And something tocks but something sticks,
And everything seems somewhat mixed,
But you're not that far from home.

Falling, sliding, floating, gliding,
Thinking, shrinking, kind of sinking feeling inside.

It's all gone strange, you don't know why,
You're not that far from home,
The world you knew has gone awry,
Your heart feels like a stone,
Then minutes slip and seconds slide,
The world is tilted to one side,
It's all gone strange, you don't know why,
You're not that far from home.

Falling, sliding, floating, gliding,
Thinking, shrinking, kind of sinking feeling inside.

You hold your breath, try not to cry,
You're not that far from home,
Can't put things back how hard you try,
You're feeling quite alone,
But then you find it's not too bad,
You know that you're not going mad,
There are adventures to be had
Not that far from home.

Falling, sliding, floating, gliding,
Shifting, drifting, quite uplifting feeling inside.

But then you find it's not too bad,
You know that you're not going mad,
There are adventures to be had
Not that far from home.

ALICE

Curiouser and curiouser.
What sort of tarts are these? I think mum had better check her recipe.
Too much self-raising flour.

SHE SEES THE MUSHROOMS.

And where did they come from? This all feels a bit weird.

A WHITE RABBIT APPEARS.

RABBIT Oh dear! Oh dear. I'll be late, I'll be too late. She'll have my head, as sure as ferrets are ferrets. Where can they be?

ALICE IS HIDING BEHIND THE TART.

RABBIT Ah ha! You've got them.

ALICE What?

RABBIT The tarts, of course. Who let them escape? Evidence. Evidence. Someone will pay for this and it won't be me, young girl. Give it here.

ALICE Whatever you say.

SHE HANDS HIM THE GIANT TART.

RABBIT Indeed.

ALICE Um excuse me but... Are you a rabbit?

RABBIT Do I look like a rabbit?

ALICE You're not the Easter Bunny are you?

RABBIT Could be. Might be. At certain times of the year I am mistaken for him.

ALICE Really?

RABBIT Really? Really look like him? You think so?

ALICE Well I don't know. I don't think I've ever actually seen the Easter Bunny before.

RABBIT I'll take that as a yes. And I'll take this, as you know.

HE IS ABOUT TO LEAVE.

ALICE As I know what?

RABBIT If you can't remember things that haven't happened yet, you're not going to get very far in this place.

ALICE In this place?

RABBIT Here. Oh you're not where you were dear. Well you are, but you're not. And the only way to undo that knot is to take off your tie.

ALICE But I'm not wearing a tie. So how can I take it off?

RABBIT Exactly.

ALICE Exactly what?

RABBIT What you said.

ALICE I didn't say anything.

RABBIT Suit yourself, and it looks like you have. I can recommend a good tailor.

ALICE I don't need a tailor.

RABBIT In any case, when the case is finally opened, it'll be an open and shut case. Then you'll wish you were wearing a tie, believe you me.

HE STARTS TO EXIT.

ALICE You're not making any sense.

RABBIT And you're not making any dollars. I hope you know what you've got yourself in for. In for a penny, in for a pound, money makes the world go round. Not a case you can win really, such a pity. And you seem like such a nice girl. But I'll see you there and you'd better not be late.

ALICE Late for what? What are you talking about?

RABBIT You'd better not be late.

HE EXITS.

ALICE Thanks for the advice, Mr Rabbit. Rabbit! What am I doing talking to a rabbit? What's going on? He said I wasn't where I was, but that doesn't really help me with where I am. Everything looks sort of familiar, but it sure feels odd. I'd better find the others. They'll think I'm going crazy. Dinah. Where did I put her? Somewhere around here.

SHE LOOKS AROUND BUT CAN'T FIND HER.

 We've got to go. This place is too weird.

SHE SPOTS WHAT SHE THINKS IS DINAH AND PICKS IT UP

"TEA FOR YOU"

(♩ = 180)

SWING

E B E B E A B

Tea for you, my-special brew, a cup of steaming leaf. A kettle of the finest fish, a teapot full of beef. Tea for you, one-lump or two? It's sure to hit the spot. You'll feel chipper with a sip of tea from this old pot. There is nothing it can't fix I'm sure, sore teeth or aching toes, bad breath or runny nose, whatever ails - it never fails to cure. Tea for you, my-special brew, im-ported from Ceylon, one with sugar, one with milk, & yours was white with one?