

Adapted from the novel by Dave Alan Thomas

Lyrics by Dave Alan Thomas (“Dreaming” based on a poem by Lewis Carroll)

Music by AJ Neaher

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

All roles will be played by a ten-member ensemble (plus, a pianist) as follows:

ALICE

A: (MAD HATTER/MARCH HARE/DORMOUSE)

B: (WHITE RABBIT)

C: (DUCHESS/DUCK)

D: (QUEEN OF HEARTS/DODO)

E: (GRYPHON/EAGLET/PIGEON/PIG)

F: (MOCK TURTLE/EAGLET/BILL THE LIZARD/FISH FOOTMAN)

G: (CHESHIRE CAT/MOUSE/GUARD)

H: (KNAVE OF HEARTS/FROG FOOTMAN)

I: (CATERPILLAR/PAT THE HEDGEHOG/COOK/EXECUTIONER)

Narrator*

Singer**

Pianist***

*Any member that suits the staging best for lines of the the “Narrator” This could be a character that breaks the fourth wall while also playing a character within a scene or it can be one of the players that is not already currently assigned to a character in any given scene.

**Although the Mad Hatter is a likely candidate to sing lead on these songs, as he is also the guitarist (or extra musician) they have a “Greek chorus” quality that would lend them to any member of the ensemble, other than Alice, to take part in or to sing lead. That assignment can be at the discretion of the director and music/vocal director, based on the best attributes and abilities of your cast and directorial concept. They will simply be listed as SINGER in the script.

***The pianist is the only member of the show that remains a musician throughout the dream and does not take on other characters. If the pianist is also a singer, he/she may also assist in vocals to backup the songs. ENSEMBLE

The ENSEMBLE can form whatever is needed in the show to help tell the story. They could be characters, they could physically express emotion, form walls, trees, be parts of the caterpillar’s body, carry ALICE to make her appear as if she was falling, or in any other imaginative way.

Note: For the first production of this fantasy with music, at All Beaches Experimental Theatre, we have chosen a setting of the Edwardian era in America along a seaside boardwalk. Suggestions about staging in the pre-show, particularly, reflect this concept. Lyrics specific to this concept have been written, but words like “shore” could replace “sea,” if this was to placed more

traditionally with Alice falling asleep along a lakeshore in England. The songs are used to introduce action, but are not character driven. They introduce themes or moments in the pending scene. Music underscoring is also used to enhance moments and is used suggestively to demonstrate metaphorical action, such as the growing and shrinking of ALICE.

PRE-SHOW:

(As the audience arrives, they enter a setting that is seaside. Members of the ensemble are real people in this world and will become members of Alice's dream - not unlike the framing device used in *The Wizard of Oz*. As the audience enters the space, members of the cast appear at the boardwalk, buskers of all sorts - street musicians, portrait sketch artists, card trick magicians, vendors and visitors pass in and out of the space and intermingle with the audience. Sounds of the sea shore and boardwalk are heard. A strolling guitarist might appear early in the pre-show and the pianist may join just before curtain. Some suggestions: the ensemble member that will play the Cheshire Cat might be sketching portraits of audience members, only to find that the canvas is blank when he/she has finished, to represent the vanishing that this member will do later in the show. One cast member, possibly the member that will play the Queen or the Knave, might be doing card magic and engage with Alice before the pre-show ends. The member that will play the White Rabbit, might be playing hopscotch - hopping to very precise beat - or the White Rabbit might be a cop who is a stickler for rules and code enforcement at the boardwalk. Whatever the assigned role in the pre-show, try to find a fitting counterpart to this ensemble member's major character duty that hints as to who he/she will become. In the appropriate moment, ALICE - a traditionally dressed girl of the era - comes in carrying a book and sits down, surrounded by other books for classical studies that may have been used in her time. Perhaps these have been placed here for or by her to spend her day by the shore along with other oddities. She listens to the musicians as she glances through her book - searching for something. She ponders over a few pages in one book before tiring and moving to another. Boredom appears in ALICE's demeanor from the rigidity of the structure, rules, and topics in these studies. Although she may genuinely try to get interested in these works, she seems to fail each time. She is interrupted in her studies by the entertainment of the boardwalk characters from time to time. She is listless and appears to be awaiting something to do or to discover that she has not discovered before. The PRE-SHOW blends into the opening of the show. Her head nods in drowsiness from time to time. ALICE pushes away her last book of study in a tired frustration.)

ALICE: Why are there so many rules! These horrid books.

(ALICE puts her head down over her books. In a few moments, those that are watching might not know if she is resting and daydreaming or if she has indeed nodded off to sleep.)

SINGER: (Song: "Dreaming." Addressing the audience. Spoken in time with the music.)

CHILDREN NOW, THAT NESTLE NEAR,
EAGER EYE AND WILLING EAR,
PLEASED A SIMPLE TALE TO HEAR

(Singing.)

IN A WONDERLAND WE SLIDE,
DREAMING AS THE DAYS GO BY,
DREAMING AS THE SUMMERS DIE;

CHILDREN COME, OUR TALE TO HEAR,
EAGER EYE AND WILLING EAR,
LOVINGLY SHALL NESTLE NEAR.

ECHOES FADE AND MEMORIES DIE;
ALICE MOVES UNDER SKIES
NEVER SEEN BY WAKING EYES.

CHILDREN YET, THE TALE TO HEAR,
EAGER EYE AND WILLING EAR,
LOVINGLY SHALL NESTLE NEAR.

IN A WONDERLAND WE LIE,
DREAMING AS THE DAYS GO BY,
DREAMING AS THE SUMMERS DIE;

EVER DRIFTING DOWN THE STREAM—
LINGERING IN THE GOLDEN GLEAM—
LIFE, WHAT IS BUT A DREAM?

(With the exception of sleeping ALICE, together, the ENSEMBLE announces the chapter titles. It is best to have one member say the "Chapter One" to prepare the rest of the cast to come in together with the title.)

NARRATOR: Chapter 1:

CAST: Down the Rabbit Hole!

(The announcement seems to awaken ALICE. The ENSEMBLE scatters or spreads out, exposing ALICE and the WHITE RABBIT, who looks to his pocket watch. The WHITE RABBIT is all business and ruled by the clock and sense of duty; if possible, the WHITE RABBIT is multi-tasking at all times.)

B/WHITE RABBIT: (In a matter-of-fact, but worried tone) Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!

(ALICE starts to her feet.)

ALICE: I have never before seen a rabbit with either pockets, or a watch to take out of it,- or one that speaks!

(For the purpose of this chapter only, *suggested* cast members are assigned to the lines of narration. However, they can be re-assigned as the blocking develops for production.)

NARRATOR/PLAYER A: And, burning with curiosity, she ran after it.

[MUSIC underscore in.]

NARRATOR/PLAYER C: She was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole, under a hedge.

NARRATOR/PLAYER D: In another moment, down went Alice after it!

NARRATOR/PLAYER E: The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way and then dipped suddenly down, -

NARRATOR/PLAYER F: -so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.

NARRATOR/PLAYER G: Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time, as she went down, to look about her.

NARRATOR/PLAYER H: First, she tried to make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything.

NARRATOR/PLAYER I: Then she looked at the sides of the well and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and bookshelves.

NARRATOR/PLAYER A: Here and there she saw maps and pictures hung up on pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed.

NARRATOR/PLAYER C: It was labeled "ORANGE MARMALADE," but, to her great disappointment, it was empty.

(ALICE puts the jar "away" as if onto a shelf as she falls.)

ENSEMBLE: Down, down, down!

NARRATOR/PLAYER D: Would the fall never come to an end?

NARRATOR/PLAYER E: Alice felt that she was dozing off, when suddenly -

ENSEMBLE: Thump! Thump!

[MUSIC underscore out.]

NARRATOR/PLAYER F: And the fall was over.

ALICE: I'm not a bit hurt! Now, to get my bearings.

NARRATOR/PLAYER G: She jumped up in a moment. She looked up, but it was all dark overhead.

NARRATOR/PLAYER H: Before her was another long passage - And the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it.

[MUSIC underscores a descent.]

ALICE: He looks as if there is not a moment to be lost.

NARRATOR/PLAYER I: Away went Alice like the wind and was just in time to hear -

B/WHITE RABBIT: Oh, my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting! I'll have to face the music!

MUSICIAN or HATTER: Yes, you will.

NARRATOR/PLAYER E: And as the White Rabbit turned a corner, she was close behind it -

NARRATOR/PLAYER F: But the Rabbit was no longer to be seen.

NARRATOR/PLAYER G: She found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

(In this section, at director's discretion, the ENSEMBLE available - A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I - can present themselves as these doors and respond to ALICE trying to "open" them.)

NARRATOR/PLAYER H: There were doors all 'round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering -

ALICE: How shall I ever to get out again?

NARRATOR/PLAYER I: Suddenly she came upon a little table. There was nothing on it but a tiny golden key.

ALICE: This might belong to one of the doors of the hall; but, alas! The locks are too large, or the key is too small!

NARRATOR/PLAYER C: At any rate, it would not open any of them.

NARRATOR/PLAYER D: However, on the second time 'round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high.

NARRATOR/PLAYER C: She tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight -

ALICE: It fits!

NARRATOR/PLAYER E: Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage.

ALICE: It's not much larger than a rat-hole.

NARRATOR/PLAYER F: She knelt down and looked along the passage -

ALICE: It is the loveliest garden I have ever seen! - Beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains! But, I cannot fit. How I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin.

NARRATOR/PLAYER E: Alice went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate, a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes.

NARRATOR/PLAYER G: This time she found a little bottle on it -

ALICE: This certainly was not here before...

NARRATOR/PLAYER H: And tied 'round the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words:

ENSEMBLE and ALICE: "Drink me."

ALICE: I had better look first, and see whether it's marked 'poison' or not, for I have never forgotten that, if you drink from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

NARRATOR/PLAYER I: However, this bottle was not marked "poison," so Alice ventured to taste it...

ALICE: It tastes sort of mixed flavor of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy and hot buttered toast -

NARRATOR/PLAYER I: Needless to say...She very soon finished it off!

ALICE: What a curious feeling! I must be shutting up like a telescope!

NARRATOR/PLAYER A: And so it was indeed! She was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through the little door into that lovely garden.

(ALICE goes toward the door.)

ALICE: Oh, but I've forgotten the little golden key!

NARRATOR/PLAYER C: But when she went back to the table for it, she found she could not possibly reach it: she tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table.

ALICE: It's too slippery, I'll never reach it!

(ALICE sits down and starts to cry; then, thinks better of it...)

ALICE: Come, there's no use in crying like that!

NARRATOR/PLAYER D: Alice addressed herself rather sharply.

ALICE: Alice, I advise you to leave off this minute!

NARRATOR/PLAYER E: She generally gave herself very good advice.

NARRATOR/PLAYER F: Though she very seldom followed it.

NARRATOR/PLAYER G: And sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes.

NARRATOR/PLAYER H: Soon her eye fell on a little glass box that was lying under the table: She opened it and found in it a very small cake, with the words...

ENSEMBLE and ALICE: "Eat me."

ALICE: Well, I'll eat it, and if it makes me grow larger, I can reach the key; and if it makes me grow smaller, I can creep under the door: so either way I'll get into the garden, and I don't care which happens!

NARRATOR/PLAYER I: She ate a little bit and said anxiously to herself -

ALICE: Which way? Which way?

(ALICE holds her hand on the top of her head to feel which way she was growing.)

NARRATOR/PLAYER A: She was quite surprised to find that she remained the same size, so she set to work and very soon finished off the cake.

(The SINGER joins the MUSICIAN to sing.)

(Song: "Telescopes.")

A: TELESCOPES EXPAND AND SHUT
 BRINGING DISTANCE CLOSER, BUT
 GROWING UP AND DOWN WITH CAKE
 MIGHT JUST BE A SMALL MISTAKE.
 IT'S HARD TO SAY WHICH WAY TO GO;
 IT'S SOMETHING YOU MAY NEVER KNOW.
 THERE ARE KEYS AND THERE ARE DOORS -
 CHOOSING PATHS NOT KNOWN BEFORE
 IS SOMETHING THAT WE ALL MUST DO,
 FOR RABBITS WHITE AND GIRLS IN BLUE.
 NO MORE CRYING, JUST GET GOING -
 DRY YOUR EYES BEFORE THE FLOWING.
 SHEDDING TEARS CAN MAKE A FLOOD
 OR MAKE YOU STUCK, LIKE STICKS IN MUD.
 EVEN MICE MUST FACE THEIR FEARS,
 OR BE LOST IN POOLS OF TEARS.