ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Story by Lewis Carroll

On a warm summer day, Alice was lying in the grass, watching the white clouds drift across the sky like fluffy sheep. Beside her sat her sister, reading a book, but Alice found that terribly boring. She sighed. "Oh, I wish something exciting would happen for once!"

Just then, a strange white rabbit came hopping by. It was wearing a neat little waistcoat, pulled out a golden pocket watch, and cried out alarmed, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" Alice stared in surprise. Without thinking twice, she jumped up and ran after it. She saw the rabbit disappear quickly into a hole in the ground and without hesitation, she crawled in after it. And then — WHOOSH! — down she fell!

But she didn't fall like a stone. No! She floated gently downward, as if she were gliding through a cloud of cotton candy. Around her were shelves with books, clocks, and pictures, as though someone had built a living room inside the rabbit hole. "I wonder if I'll fall all the way to the center of the earth," murmured Alice, yawning — for the fall seemed to last forever. At last, she landed with a soft thump! on a heap of dry leaves. She brushed the dust off her dress and looked around. She was standing in a long hallway full of doors. Big doors, small doors, heavy doors, tiny doors, but all of them were locked.

On a glass table lay a golden key, but every door was far too large. Finally, Alice spotted a teeny-tiny door, and through it she could see a most beautiful garden filled with colorful flowers and sparkling grass. "Oh, that's where I want to go!" she thought. But the door was so small that not even her nose would fit through. Disappointed, she looked around and noticed a little bottle with a label that read "Drink me."

Alice took a cautious sip, and poof! — she shrank until she was as small as a mouse! Now she could have easily gone through the tiny door, but oh dear! the key was still up on the table, which now looked as tall as a mountain! Then she found a piece of cake with a note that said "Eat me."
"Well," thought Alice, "maybe this will help!" She took a bite and began to grow and grow, until her head nearly touched the ceiling! "Oh no, now I'm much too big!" she cried and began to weep. Her tears poured and poured, until she had made a real lake of them! When she finally calmed down, she saw the bottle again. There was just a tiny drop left. Brave as ever, Alice took another sip and shrink! she was small again. This time, she remembered the key!

But now she was splashing in her own pool of tears. A little mouse swam by, and soon other animals joined in. Together they paddled to shore and held a funny little race in circles to dry off. They laughed so much that even the snails looked startled. A bit later, Alice saw the white rabbit again, the very one who had started all this trouble! After a few more adventures, she finally managed to follow him through the tiny door.

In the curious garden, she met a large blue caterpillar sitting on a mushroom, lazily blowing smoke rings into the air. "Who are you?" asked the caterpillar. Alice thought hard. "I... I'm not quite sure anymore. I've been big and small so many times today, I'm all confused!" The caterpillar smirked.

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"Eat from this mushroom," it said. "One side will make you grow, the other will make you small."
Alice took a careful nibble and grew so tall that she could see above the treetops! Then she nibbled from the other side and became tiny again. After a few bites, she was finally just the right size.

Soon after, Alice met a grinning cat that appeared out of nowhere, then slowly vanished until only its wide smile remained. "Which way should I go?" asked Alice. "That depends," purred the cat, "on where you want to get to." Alice sighed, that didn't help much. "What kind of people live around here?" she asked. The Cheshire Cat pointed her toward the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, then faded into thin air.

When Alice arrived, they were having a never-ending tea party! The table was covered with teapots, cups, and crumbs, and everyone kept moving one seat over. The Hatter asked silly riddles, the March Hare stirred his tea, and the Dormouse slept right in the middle — inside a teapot!
"It's always tea-time here!" laughed the Hatter.

After the funny, but utterly mad tea party, Alice came to a splendid garden where the Queen of Hearts was playing croquet. But not with ordinary clubs and balls — oh no! The clubs were pink flamingos, the balls were little hedgehogs, and the card soldiers bent down to make arches for the game! The Queen shouted "Off with their heads!" whenever something displeased her, but luckily, nobody ever got hurt. The whole thing was such a glorious chaos that Alice couldn't help laughing.
At last, Alice was called to a great trial — someone had dared to steal the Queen's tarts! The white rabbit scurried about with papers, the card-judges chattered nonsense, and the Queen screamed again: "Off with her head!"
Everything grew louder and wilder, until suddenly all the playing cards rose into the air and flew straight at Alice like a storm! She covered her face and cried,
"Stop! Stop!"

And then — she woke up. She was lying in the grass again, listening to the birds singing and feeling the warm sun on her skin. She smiled. Perhaps it had only been a dream... perhaps not. But Alice knew one thing for sure: Whenever she wished, she could return to Wonderland — just by closing her eyes and believing.

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