

ALICE IN CELLPHONELAND

By Kim L. Hubbard

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ISBN: 978-1-64479-027-4

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ALICE IN CELLPHONELAND

A One Act Comedy Adaptation based on Alice in Wonderland

By Kim L. Hubbard

SYNOPSIS: Alice is lost in Cellphoneland and can't get a signal! She meets Cheshire Cat offers to help, escorting her to a very strange tea party where everyone talks only to their cellphones and not face-to-face. Come along and see how they all learn a thing or two about friendship, respect, and common courtesy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 5 either; gender flexible)

- ALICE (f).....13-17; A charming, polite young girl with a keen mind and an open heart who absolutely loves her cell phone, talking to, and texting her many friends constantly, which makes her a little clueless as to her surroundings. *(108 lines)*
- CHESHIRE CAT (m/f)..... A wonderfully mysterious figure who does not, by choice, own a cell phone, but is very charming, wise, and very aware of everyone and everything. *(60 lines)*
- MAD HATTER (m/f)..... A bit “mad” in a non-threatening sort of way, but is easily distracted by anything and everything. *(34 lines)*

- WHITE RABBIT (m/f).....A rather wacky and frantic creature who is always running late for a very important date, but never looks where he/she is going because, well, he/she is so engrossed in a cell phone. (23 lines)
- RED QUEEN/KING (m/f).....As big and bawdy a character as one could imagine, with an ego to match and a cell phone that must always be bigger and better than anyone else's. (34 lines)
- DODO BIRD (m/f)A rather sad, yet proud creature who doesn't quite fit in with the rest of the group, but spends his/her time texting everyone, regardless. (38 lines)

DURATION: 45 minutes

TIME: Present day

SETTING: Forest

SET: There should be some large rocks and boulders scattered about, and maybe a tree or two that will serve as places to sit, or even hide behind. For the infamous tea party, all that is needed is one small table, with enough chairs equal to the number of characters invited to tea, minus one. Since the primary actions takes place in a woodland setting, the use of simple painted backdrops, flats, or even a cyc, have proven to be the most effective way of showing the location of the forest. There are even "paint by number" canvas sheets available for purchase on line that offer a wide variety of design options.

STAGING: Actors are encouraged to make their entrances SL, SR, CS or through the house and down the aisles, if structurally appropriate. Many characters will interact with the audience throughout the show.

SOUND: To avoid using actual working phones on stage, it is suggested that all sound effects be created and orchestrated by a sound designer/technician. The script offers many opportunities for the sound of cell phones to be creative, fun, and inventive, but also controlled.

COSTUMES: Since the ALICE IN WONDERLAND characters are so well known from literature, animation and film, it is recommended that the costume designs reflect, within reason, those images. The Mad Hatter must have a very large, sturdy hat. But, creativity is a wonderful thing.

PROPS

With the exception of the Cheshire Cat, every character should have a large, very obvious cellphone. Cutting out thick cardboard, or 1/4 plywood shapes and painting them bright colors works extremely well. A small wagon is needed that is strong enough to hold the weight of Red Queen and can be pulled by the actor playing White Rabbit.

ALICE – She carries one, average size cell phone, but no other props.

RED QUEEN'S – phone should be WAAAYYY over the top, twice the size of everyone else's, and with every level of glitz you can muster. It also needs a large antenna. The more absurd this cell phone looks, the better.

CHESHIRE CAT – No specific props needed.

DODO BIRD – One cell phone.

MAD HATTER – needs at least a dozen phones of all sizes and types. Again, these do not need to be real, working phones, but just cut outs. From a distance, the audience will never be able to tell the difference. The character needs to be able to stash them in every little pocket and hiding place in his costume. MH also carries a monocle which is stashed in the hat.

WHITE RABBIT – should have, aside from its own cellphone, a very large alarm clock hanging around his waist, from an equally large chain. The old fashioned alarm clock with the two brass bells and a large face is easily read by the audience at great distance.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Alice In Cellphoneland offers directors, designers, and actors a chance to test their creative skills by tackling well-known characters and presenting them in a totally new and delightful way. Although the characters are familiar, you have never seen them quite like this. Schools, colleges, community theater groups as well as professional companies, will find audiences enthralled and even a bit introspective as they watch this one-act play bring to life the very current theme of our society being a bit too “connected.” There are no hard-and-fast rules. “Feed your head!” It is everything an imaginative theater company could ask for.

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AT RISE: ALICE is walking through the forest, ignoring the beauty and serenity of it all. She is completely engrossed in her cell phone, texting/tweeting anyone and everyone, giggling about whatever it is she is texting/tweeting about. Suddenly, she realizes she can't get a signal on her phone.

ALICE: Oh, no! I've lost the signal. (*Holding the phone up high, she moves it all around the stage trying to find a new signal. She walks up through the audience, oblivious to the children, in desperate search of a signal. Nothing. A little tantrum.*) Oooh! (*She stomps her feet in frustration and then suddenly notices the audience around her. They startle her.*) Ah! Oh, my! Hello! Do you live here? (*The audience will likely answer, individually and collectively, in both the affirmative and the negative. ALICE should be ready to control the responses.*) You see, I was talking, texting and tweeting with my friends and I kind of, ... well, I guess I wasn't really paying attention to where I was going and then I lost the signal on my phone and ... now I'm lost. Can you help me? (*Brief pause for audience response.*) Oh, thank you so much. (*Crossing down to CS, she looks about the "forest."*) My, oh my, this is a beautiful forest! I don't think I ever really noticed it before. It's right near my house too. My mother and father and I used to go for walks after dinner. I just love the forest, don't you? (*Brief pause for audience response.*) How many of you are birds? (*Brief pause for audience response.*) Oh, that's wonderful. Can I hear you all sound like beautiful birds? (*Brief pause for audience response. ALICE should be very complementary and encouraging.*) Oh, what beautiful birds you all are. Are there any crickets, or frogs, or bears? (*Beat.*) Can I hear all of you too? (*Brief pause for audience response.*) Oh, thank you all so much. That was exciting... and loud. But, I should really call my mother to let her know where I am... except ... (*Looking around.*) ... for some reason, I still can't get a signal.

ALICE keeps holding her cell phone up and waving it about, trying to get a signal. CHESHIRE CAT is sitting in a tree, or on a rock, or somewhere not immediately obvious to anyone. He is enjoying watching her. Suddenly, ALICE notices CHESHIRE CAT, who has now also decided to make himself more obvious. She is a bit startled, but not scared.

ALICE: Oh – hello! Can you help me?

CHESHIRE CAT should always be on the move, here and there, slipping behind this and that. He should be making it necessary for ALICE to keep searching for him and being surprised where he appears each time, almost question for question, answer for answer.

CHESHIRE CAT: Can I? Hmm... I don't know. Will I, might be the better question.

ALICE: Well, then... will you help me?

CHESHIRE CAT: Yes! *(Thinking.)* But I don't know if I can.

ALICE: Wait. What? Now I'm confused. Are you going to help me or not?

CHESHIRE CAT: That depends. *(Disappears behind something.)*

ALICE: *(Looking for him.)* On what?

CHESHIRE CAT: *(Popping up behind something else.)* On what it is you want me to do. You see, I can do a great many things, but there are even more things that I cannot. So, it depends on which one you pick doesn't it? So, I am more than willing to help you. I just don't know if I really can.

CHESHIRE CAT hides again while ALICE is thinking.

ALICE: Hmm... that makes sense, I guess.

CHESHIRE CAT: *(Popping up again, a little closer to her.)* Yes... sense is something they don't make much of these days, do they?

ALICE: No, I suppose not.

CHESHIRE CAT: Precisely. That is why I try and make as much of it as I can, as often as I can. *(Walks right up to her, face to face.)* Now, what sense can I make for you?

ALICE: Well, I was wondering if you could tell me, please, which way I should go from here.

CHESHIRE CAT: Again... that depends.

ALICE: On what?

CHESHIRE CAT: On exactly where it is you want to go.

ALICE: Oh... I see. Of course, you're right. How silly of me. *(With clarity.)* I would like, very much, to go home.

CHESHIRE CAT: *(Very dismissive.)* Sorry... can't help you. *(Starts to leave.)*

ALICE: Wait, please!

CHESHIRE CAT stops.

ALICE: I thought you said you would be willing to help me?

CHESHIRE CAT: Correct. I am more than willing to help, but in this case... I cannot. *(Starts to leave again.)*

ALICE: But why?

CHESHIRE CAT: *(Turning around.)* Because I don't know where you live.

ALICE: Oh, I see. There you go making sense again.

CHESHIRE CAT should acknowledge her use of the word "sense."

ALICE: Well, I live... *(Looks around, left, right, up, down.)* ...um... *(Keeps looking, but gets all turned around.)* Oh, dear! I really am lost, aren't I?

CHESHIRE CAT: So it would appear.

ALICE: *(Looking around the room again, noticing the audience and the beautiful forest. Gets an idea.)* I know! If I just keep walking long enough and far enough, I will eventually get somewhere, won't I?

CHESHIRE CAT: That would seem inevitable. Although, where you end up may not be where you want to be.

ALICE: Even more sense. My, my, you are very good.

CHESHIRE CAT: Why thank you.

ALICE: You're welcome. But that still doesn't solve my problem. *(An idea.)* I know! Perhaps if I just keep walking through the forest I can pick up a phone signal again.

- CHESHIRE CAT:** (*Dubious.*) Hmm... I suppose that is a possibility. And possibilities are always so very exciting, aren't they?
- ALICE:** Yes, I suppose they are. (*Adding some additional clarity.*) But they are also filled with uncertainty.
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Yes, *uncertainty!* That is what makes any journey so wonderfully exciting, don't you think? If one always knew where they were going and how to get there, there would be no adventure... would there?
- ALICE:** (*Likes this idea a lot.*) Quite right! I like your thinking. (*Starts to leave to walk through the forest.*)
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Would you mind if I tagged along to keep you company?
- ALICE:** Not at all. (*Thinking.*) But it would be inappropriate to accept an invitation from a complete stranger, don't you think?
- CHESHIRE CAT:** (*Thinking.*) Hmm... quite right. But I am more of an "incomplete stranger", wouldn't you say. After all, we have met.
- ALICE:** True. But, I don't even know your name?
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Is that important?
- ALICE:** Of course.
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Why?
- ALICE:** Because... well, because everyone has a name.
- CHESHIRE CAT:** (*Thinking again.*) Apparently, I am the exception.
- ALICE:** (*A bit perplexed.*) Well, then... what shall I call you?
- CHESHIRE CAT:** (*Pondering.*) Well... what name do you like?
- ALICE:** (*Thinking it over as she examines him a bit.*) I guess that would depend on exactly *what* you are?
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Hmm, interesting point. What do you think I am?
- ALICE:** Well... (*Looking him over more closely, up and down.*) ...if I were to guess...
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Do you always guess?
- ALICE:** Only when I don't know what else to do. Is that wrong?
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Not necessarily. But it can often lead to assumptions. And I have noticed that assumptions are seldom correct.
- ALICE:** Ah, that is another very good point.
- CHESHIRE CAT:** Thank you.
- ALICE:** You are quite welcome. May I ask you then, are you something in the Cat family?

CHESHIRE CAT: (*Looking himself over now.*) You know... I believe I am, although I've never really thought about it. Is that important too?

ALICE: For others to know who and what you are? Well, of course. Don't you think so?

CHESHIRE CAT: Not really. The important thing is only that I know who I am. I prefer to let others think what they wish as far as *what* I am.

ALICE: (*Thinking it over.*) Hmm... I see. But I must call you something. Otherwise, I will be saying, "Hey you!" just to get your attention.

CHESHIRE CAT: Which would be fine if I was the only other person here in the forest.

ALICE: But that's not likely, is it?

CHESHIRE CAT: Not likely, no. (*Looking to the audience.*) In fact, it would appear we have a great many creatures with us here in the forest.

ALICE: Oh, yes. We have birds and crickets and frogs and even a few bears. (*To the audience.*) Don't we?

The audience will likely reply with a resounding "YES." Players should acknowledge it, but move on quickly.

CHESHIRE CAT: My, my... there are a lot of them too.

ALICE: Yes, there are. But, we have not solved the question of what I should call you. So, with your permission, I think I shall call you... (*With confidence.*) ...Cat!

CHESHIRE CAT: (*Thinking it over.*) Hmm... I rather like it. It is wonderfully appropriate, under the circumstances, and very simple. (*Extends his paw.*) Then Cat it is.

ALICE and CHESHIRE CAT shake. Suddenly, WHITE RABBIT comes rushing through the audience (if possible). WHITE RABBIT is carrying a very large cell phone on an equally large chain and is in a very frantic state of mind.

WHITE RABBIT: Oh, oh, oh, my heavens, my goodness gracious, I am late! So very late, for a very important date! *(Starts to rush off stage, but is so engrossed in their cell phone that they almost bumps into ALICE and CAT.)* Oh! *(Looking up suddenly and noticing them.)* Well, goodness me, you should really watch where you're going! *(Scolding them both.)* You almost ran into me!

ALICE: But we weren't even moving.

CHESHIRE CAT: She is quite right. In fact, we weren't moving at all.

ALICE: Quite correct, Cat. *(Taking a firm stand.)* It was you who almost ran into us! You should really be more careful, running around with your head buried in your cell phone like that.

CHESHIRE CAT: *(A bit scolding to the RABBIT.)* She is quite right about that too. You could have hurt yourself, or worse... someone else.

ALICE: Yes, you were very distracted. That can cause any number of very serious accidents, you know.

WHITE RABBIT: *(Feeling sorry.)* Oh, well of course, you are right. I am truly sorry. *(Frantic again.)* It's just that I am late! So very late!

ALICE: For what?

WHITE RABBIT: *(Stating the obvious.)* For a very important date! *(Incredulously.)* I thought I said that!

ALICE: You did. But you never said specifically what you were late for.

WHITE RABBIT: *(Again, stating the obvious, but with a tad more shock that they didn't know.)* Why... the Red Queen's tea party, of course!

ALICE: Oh. *(Unimpressed.)* Is that important?

WHITE RABBIT: *(Shocked.)* What?! It's the Red Queen's exclusive tea party. Of course, it's important! Anybody who is anybody will be there. *(Struts around, feeling very important.)*

CHESHIRE CAT: Except you, apparently.

WHITE RABBIT: *(Almost heart-stopping panic.)* What?! Did you hear something I didn't? But I didn't get a text or a tweet. *(Thinking.)* Did I? *(Frantically checking his phone.)* Oh dear, oh dear. *(Discovering he hasn't missed any messages.)* No. No missed messages. Whew! You had me very worried there for a moment. I check my messages hundreds of times a day, just so that I won't miss anything.

CHESHIRE CAT: That must be exhausting?

WHITE RABBIT: Oh, it is, it is. Very exhausting, in deed. But very important. *(With a bit of a boast.)* People can reach me any time, rain or shine, day, or night. This way, I am never late for anything.

ALICE: What time are you supposed to be there?

WHITE RABBIT: Half-past whatever... precisely! *(Looking at his phone clock.)* Ahhhh!! And I am very late! Oh my! *(Starts running around, back and forth and in circles.)*

I can't be late, I can't be late,
 The Queen most certainly will not wait!
 She gets so mad her face gets red
 And then she'll shout, "Off with his head!"
 I like my head. It's not for show.
 My hat would have no place to go.
 So please excuse my hurried pace
 It's time to go! I can't be late!

WHITE RABBIT exists through the audience (if possible), on the opposite side from where they came in, ad-libbing extreme panic and urgency all the way out.

ALICE: What an interesting fellow. And a very nervous one too. Apparently, he is running a little late.

CHESHIRE CAT: For a very important date. An exclusive tea party, it would seem.

Entering SR is a DODO BIRD. A very silly-looking bird, but with a self-assured air. ALICE and CAT take notice of DODO BIRD. DODO BIRD is wearing earphones and listening to music, oblivious to all others, dancing through the aisles, totally unaware of anyone, or anything. The creature is so thoroughly caught up in its music that it has become a dancing fool. The outside world does not exist.

DODO BIRD: *(Singing to itself. To the tune of, "DO WAH DIDDY DIDDY" written by Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich.)*

WHAT'S THAT CREATURE JUST A WALKIN' DOWN THE STREET?

SINGIN'...DODO BIRDS ARE AS HAPPY AS CAN BE!

AIN'T NOBODY ELSE OUT THERE WHO LOOKS LIKE ME!

SINGIN'...DODO BIRDS ARE AS HAPPY AS CAN BE!

Breaking into a wild dance. Actor should try and get some of the older members of the audience to call out the repeated lyrics.

YOU LOOK GOOD! LOOKS GOOD!

YOU LOOK GOOD! LOOKS FINE!

BUT I'M THE LAST OF MY KIND!

WOAH, WOAH OH, OH, ... OH YEAH!

ALICE: Excuse me!

ALICE steps in front of DODO BIRD, blocking its path. DODO BIRD stops looking around for whom ALICE could possibly be talking to, taking out their earphones.

DODO BIRD: Are you addressing me?

ALICE: Yes, yes I am. *(Gives DODO BIRD a very quizzical "once over.")* Are you a bird?

DODO BIRD: *(Checking its body, lifting a few feathers.)* What was your first clue?

ALICE: *(Realizing her silly question.)* Yes, of course, how silly of me. Of course, you're a bird. It's just that... I've never seen a bird quite like you before. *(To CHESHIRE CAT.)* Have you?

CHESHIRE CAT: *(Also giving DODO BIRD close scrutiny.)* Can't say I have, no.

DODO BIRD: And you will never see another either, because *(With great pride.)*, we do not exist. *(Struts around a bit, posing.)*

ALICE: But of course you do. You're right there. *(Pointing to DODO BIRD.)*

DODO BIRD: What?

CHESHIRE CAT: She's quite right. We can see you very clearly.

DODO BIRD: Oh... yes, I guess I am. Allow me to clarify. What I *meant* to say was, all *others* are extinct... except for me, of course.

ALICE: Oh, I am so sorry. You must be very sad.

DODO BIRD: Not at all. That means, I am unique and extra special, because I am one of a kind. Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Dodo Bird.

ALICE: It's very nice to meet you.

ALICE and CHESHIRE CAT shake hands with DODO BIRD.

ALICE: But, aren't you lonely?

DODO BIRD: For what?

ALICE: For someone else like you.

DODO BIRD: But then I wouldn't be unique, special... one of a kind, would I?

ALICE is thinking. She looks to CHESHIRE CAT for confirmation. He shrugs.

ALICE: No, I guess not.

DODO BIRD: *(Looking ALICE over.)* Is there anyone else like *you*?

ALICE: *(Thinking about it.)* Well... there are other little girls around my age, of course. And I'm sure some of them are named Alice too, but... *(A bit lost in thought.)*

DODO BIRD: But?

ALICE: But, I guess you're right. There is nobody exactly like me.

DODO BIRD: Exactly! *(Looking at CHESHIRE CAT.)* Or you either, I'll wager?

CHESHIRE CAT: Me? Oh, most definitely not. I think it is safe to say, there is no one else like me.

DODO BIRD: One of a kind too, eh?

CHESHIRE CAT: I would like to think so.

DODO BIRD: *(Looking CHESHIRE CAT over from head to toe.)* Yes, I totally agree! Ha, ha! Wonderful! And now... I must be going. I cannot stay, I came to say, I must be going. I'm glad I came, but just the same, I must be going. It must be at least half-past whatever, which means I am late... for a very important date. *(Begins to exit.)*

ALICE: (*Looking at the audience and to CHESHIRE CAT.*) Why that is precisely what the White Rabbit said.

DODO BIRD: (*Stops, spins around, and walks right up to ALICE.*) White Rabbit, did you say? You saw the White Rabbit?

ALICE: Yes. A very excited creature too.

CHESHIRE CAT: Who was running very late.

ALICE: For a very important date.

DODO BIRD: Oh, don't mind Rabbit. Rabbit is *always* late.

ALICE: I believe it was for the Red Queen's tea party.

DODO BIRD: Yes, it is her daily un-birthday tea party?

ALICE: Un-birthday tea party? What is an un-birthday tea party?

DODO BIRD: Why it's the very best *kind* of birthday tea party. A real birthday party happens only *once* out of 365 days in a year. But, an UN-birthday party we get to celebrate the other 364.

CHESHIRE CAT: Except on Leap-Year!

ALICE: Then you would get to celebrate *another* un-birthday!

DODO BIRD: Precisely! HA! HA! You've got it!

DODO BIRD shakes CHESHIRE CAT'S hand, then ALICE'S.

DODO BIRD: Would you both care to join the party?

ALICE: We would love to! (*Not wanting to be rude.*) If you're sure it's all right. We wouldn't want to impose.

DODO BIRD: Oh, no problem at all. I am in charge of the Red Queen's guest list. Here, I will use the special "Invitation ap" on my phone. (*After making several clicks, entering the data.*) There! All done!

ALICE: But, we didn't even tell you who we are. And the White Rabbit said that only special people are invited.

CHESHIRE CAT: Yes, I believe the Rabbit said, "Only anyone who is anyone is invited to the Red Queen's tea parties."

ALICE: I don't think Cat and I are particularly special in that regard.

DODO BIRD: Ha, ha! Yes, Rabbit would say that. But, you see, it doesn't really matter, because to me we are all special creatures!

He breaks away with great flourish and sings to the tune of, "PEOPLE" composed by Jule Styne with lyrics by Bob Merrill. This song is very hammy and way over the top in its presentation. This song can be sung acapella, or with a Karaoke back track. Or, the entire bit can be

cut, if desired, jumping forward to DODO BIRD'S next line. If sung, actor should feel free to use the audience as a reference point.

DODO BIRD:

CREATURES!

CREATURES WHO ARE SPECIAL.

ARE THE LUCKIEST CREATURES OF THEM ALL.

WE'RE DIFFERENT.

NOT JUST ODD, BUT DIFFERENT

AND THAT MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD SO MUCH MORE...

SPECIAL!

CREATURES WHO ARE SPECIAL

ARE THE LUCKIEST CREATURES OF THEM ALL!

ALICE and CHESHIRE CAT: *(Clapping with great enthusiasm.)*

Bravo! Bravo! Author!

DODO BIRD: *(Taking many bows, covering the house.)* Thank you, thank you, thank you! You're too kind. *(Holding his cell phone like a trophy, as if accepting a major award.)* I'd like to thank the academy, my peeps, and especially Jules Styne & Bob Merrill, without whom none of this would be possible. *(Blows kisses and takes another bow then, back to business.)* Come along now! We must be going or we'll be late!

ALICE and CHESHIRE CAT: For a very important date!

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