

# AWAITING WONDERLAND

## By Steven Stack

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**AWAITING WONDERLAND**

*A play in one act*

**By Steven Stack**

*Based on the book "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll*

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(3 females, 1 male, 9 either, 0-10 extras; No doubling possible)*

ANYA / ALICE (f) ..... Playing the role of Alice, an inquisitive girl who doesn't want to ever grow up. Anya has written this version of Alice in Wonderland and it will be her last performance. *(210 lines)*

MADILYN / EDITH / HATTER (f) ..... Anya's best friend who is playing the role of Edith, Alice's more logical older sister, and the Mad Hatter, an all-knowing, rather mad maker of hats. *(112 lines)*

MARDI / RABBIT (e) ..... Another of Anya's friends who is playing the White Rabbit, who works for the Queen but his loyalty rests with Wonderland. *(50 lines)*

MOUSE (e) ..... The matriarchal figure of Wonderland. *(37 lines)*

TWEEDLE DEE (e) ..... A very rotund creature who is considered somewhat dim but also rather joyful. *(47 lines)*

- TWEEDLE DUM (e).....A very rotund creature who is considered somewhat joyful but also rather dim. *(50 lines)*
- QUEEN OF HEARTS (f) .....Ruler of Wonderland, has now become a beheading tyrant, though she wasn't always. *(123 lines)*
- KING (m).....Loyal to the Queen to a fault, judgment is clouded because of this. *(75 lines)*
- SOLDIER (e) .....The Queen's head soldier, has been ordered to keep a watchful eye on the King. *(26 lines)*
- CHESHIRE CAT (e).....Mischievous portly feline who enjoys chaos in whatever form it comes. *(38 lines)*
- MARCH HARE (e).....A rather obsessive, finicky hare who enjoys tea parties. *(28 lines)*
- DORMOUSE (e).....An often sleepy and grumpy mouse. *(30 lines)*
- COURIER (e).....A deliverer of messages and packages. *(8 lines)*

**Note:** During the show, when rehearsing or in Wonderland, Anya, Madilyn and Mardi will be referred to as the characters they are playing. When out of character, they are referred to using their actual names.

## SUMMARY

Tonight is Anya's chance to shine. The curtain is about to rise on her adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*, and in her final performance . . . she's playing the starring role. But as she sits alone on the stage, things begin to change. And the world Anya used to escape to as a child part Carroll's world, part a world of her own creation suddenly seems all too real. As Alice or Anya tries to make sense of this new world, she must also come to grips with the truth about her own.

## DURATION

45 minutes

## NOTES ON PERFORMANCE

During the final scene, the creatures of Wonderland (*Note: here is where you can have up to 10 extras.*) should react loudly to the events of this scene. The Queen should silence them with threats or stares.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

**SET:** Since this play takes place Anya's mind and is based on *Wonderland*, feel free to be as creative with the sets as possible. Inserting set pieces that don't quite belong will add to the bizarreness of the various locales. Listed below are the locations of each scene and required set pieces.

SCENE 1: The woods and the White Rabbit's House: a chair.

SCENE 2: Inside the Queen's Palace: No set pieces required.

SCENE 3: Outdoors: No set pieces required.

SCENE 4: The Queen's Throne Room after everything has disappeared: No set required.

SCENE 5: Outdoors at the Tea Party: A table that the Hatter can sit under and at least 3 chairs.

SCENE 6: The Palace Grounds: No set required.

**PROPERTY LIST**

SCENE 1

- Edith: Book
- White Rabbit: Chair and watch.
- Mouse: Broom

SCENE 2

- Queen: Mallet
- King: Bag and book.

SCENE 3

- Soldier: Ropes.

SCENE 4

- White Rabbit: Stuffed animal, picture, script and a tiny chair.

SCENE 5

- Soldier: Ropes.
- Courier: A box with a necklace.

SCENE 6

- White Rabbit: Mallets.
- Queen: A bag with ashes.
- Alice: Necklace.
- Soldier: Swords and a platter with head. (*Note: During a production of the play there was a platter but the soldier faced away from the audience thus not needing a "head."*)

**LIGHTING**

Normal lighting except for two occasions.

1. When Anya clutches her chest during Scene 1, there needs to be a light change, perhaps from house lights to stage lighting.
2. When the bell starts gonging during Scene 6, the lights need a slow fade. When the Queen collapses, there should just be faint lighting downstage center.

**SOUND**

There are two important sound cues.

1. During Scene 1, there should be some type of waltz music playing when all the characters enter.
2. When the Queen is about to strike Alice during Scene 6, there should be the sound of a loud bell gonging in the distance.

**COSTUMES**

All characters are in their Wonderland costumes throughout. Madilyn, at the beginning, is mainly in her hatter costume, without wig and coat.

One way to do costumes is to based them on the typical costumes that these characters are known to dress in.

ALICE.....	Light blue dress, trimmed in white.
WHITE RABBIT .....	Blue petticoat, black capri-like pants, red ascot, and a watch.
MOUSE .....	Traditional clothes of a grandmotherly figure who is doing chores; bonnet.
TWEEDLE DEE & DUM.....	Large, free flowing, bright and colorful clothing. Plenty of padding for “roundness.”
QUEEN OF HEARTS .....	Fancy red dress, one that royalty would wear. Crown.
KING .....	Black tights, red shorts, red smock trimmed in gold, crown.
SOLDIER.....	Black tights, gold shorts, gold smock trimmed in red.

- CHESHIRE CAT ..... Bright colors with stripes. Look should evoke a trouble-making mischievous animal.
- DORMOUSE ..... Capri-like pants, gray jacket, bright shirt.
- MARCH HARE ..... Capri-like pants, bright shirt and jacket, flower in the lapel.
- COURIER ..... Brown drab clothing, create the look of someone who has traveled a long way.

### PRODUCTION HISTORY

Awaiting Wonderland was first performed on July 25, 2013 at the Mills Performance Hall on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. The cast was as follows:

<i>Alice/Any</i>	Olivia Elinchev
<i>Madilyn/Edith/Mad Hatter</i>	Layne Erickson
<i>Mardi/White Rabbit</i>	Lindsey Tindall
<i>Mouse</i>	Gillian Oliver
<i>Tweedle Dee</i>	Sydney Walker
<i>Tweedle Dum</i>	Kate Valdes
<i>Queen of Hearts</i>	Lauren Smith
<i>King</i>	Jason Wu
<i>Soldier</i>	Hannah Fibikar
<i>Cheshire Cat</i>	Evelyn Santoirre
<i>March Hare</i>	Alexa Grosz
<i>Dormouse</i>	Marguerite Carrithers

## SCENE 1

**SETTING:** *Meadow.*

**AT RISE:** *We see Alice lying on her sister Edith's lap. Edith is reading and Alice is clearly becoming bored. She is squirming.*

**EDITH:** Could you stop moving so much?

**ALICE:** I'm bored. I want to play.

**EDITH:** Then go play. No one is stopping you.

**ALICE:** But I wish you to play with me.

**EDITH:** I said that I would play croquet with you, but you said no.

**ALICE:** What a dreadful game. Besides, I don't know how to play.

**EDITH:** You would if you ever played.

**ALICE:** Well, I suppose I'll never know how to then. Let's do something else.

**EDITH:** I can't. I'm reading.

**ALICE:** *(Alice gets off Edith's lap and moves behind her to look over her shoulder.)* Why would you read something without pictures or conversations?

**EDITH:** Because I want to learn and grow up. And sometimes learning and growing up requires books without pictures or conversations.

**ALICE:** *(Alice stands up and crosses away.)* Well, I shall do neither then.

**EDITH:** Then you will be an ignorant child all your life, I suppose.

**ALICE:** Better an ignorant child than what you're becoming.

**EDITH:** And what is that?

**ALICE:** A grown up.

**EDITH:** But you too will one day become a grown up. If you're lucky.

**ALICE:** No. I want to remain a child forever. I wish to play and play always. In a world where there are only books with pictures and conversations in a world without cares.

**EDITH:** That's impossible, Alice. The world is full of cares.

**ALICE:** Not if you choose not to care about the cares.

**EDITH:** Do you not care about me? Or Mum? Or Father?

**ALICE:** Of course I care about . . . oh dear. Perhaps I need to stop caring about all of you. Because if I care about you, I surely must care about others and other things. But I don't think I can stop caring and if I can't stop caring then . . . I don't like the way this train of thought is going.

**EDITH:** Then get off that train and go play. Perhaps make a daisy chain.

**ALICE:** Perhaps I shall. Yes, a daisy chain would be delightfully distracting. Thank you, Edith.

**EDITH:** You're welcome. Now let me read.

*Alice jumps up and walks around looking for flowers. She struggles to find any. The White Rabbit, who has entered unseen carrying a chair, watches Alice.*

**ALICE:** This field seems devoid of flowers. How odd.

**RABBIT:** *(While placing the chair down.)* You would not find it odd, no doubt, if you knew that I had recently eaten all of the flowers.

**ALICE:** *(Alice stares at the White Rabbit and then laughs.)* I suppose I would not find it odd if I knew that. Are you - -

**RABBIT:** Sorry. I don't have time for conversation. I'm late. Good day.

**ALICE:** *(Alice watches the White Rabbit exit.)* What a peculiar experience. I've always assumed animals could talk. How else could they communicate? But one with a waistcoat and watch? That is rather bizarre. *(Turns to Edith, who is no longer moving.)* Edith, did you see that? Did you see the white rabbit? Edith? *(She crosses over to her.)* Edith? *(Alice stares at her. Pushes her slightly, to which there is no response.)* This is quite unexpected. It's as if she's a character whose page has yet to be turned to. Humph. Perhaps the white rabbit can explain. *(Alice turns to find out that she is now inside the White Rabbit's house.)* I'm inside a rather tiny home. Or I'm rather large inside a normal-sized home. I don't remember growing. But also, I don't remember going inside a home. Perhaps this is the home of the white rabbit. I shall wait for him. *(She goes and sits down and looks around.)* There are quite a lot of books. *(Alice turns to Edith.)* So how was that, Madilyn?

**MADILYN:** (*Madilyn/Edith gets up.*) It was good. It's been good for weeks now. So can we - -

**MARDI:** (*Mardi pokes her head out.*) Can I go finish getting my costume on now, Anya? The house is about to open.

**ANYA:** Well . . .

**MADILYN:** Yeah, go ahead. (*Mardi exits. Anya looks at Madilyn.*) Like I said . . . it's good.

**ANYA:** Good? Good's not what we want. We want great. This is the beginning of the play. If we don't - - (*Anya is unable to finish the thought and crosses away.*)

**MADILYN:** It is a great show. Lewis Carroll would be proud. What's this about, Anya?

**ANYA:** (*Anya turns to her.*) This is what I'm leaving behind. When that curtain closes . . . that's it.

**MADILYN:** (*Madilyn crosses beside her.*) You know that I'm your best friend, right?

**ANYA:** Right.

**MADILYN:** So, take this the way I mean it. Stop being so dramatic. There'll be other shows.

**ANYA:** You don't know that.

**MADILYN:** You're going to be okay. (*Anya looks at Madilyn, about to speak.*) You are. And when you leave, unlike most of us, you'll be remembered. Now would you relax and enjoy it a little bit?

**ANYA:** I'll try.

**MADILYN:** Good.

**ANYA:** So should - -

**MADILYN:** I finish getting on my Edith costume and making sure my Mad Hatter costume is ready? Absolutely, Anya.

*Madilyn smiles. Anya smiles back and then hugs her.*

**ANYA:** Okay . . . and thanks.

**MADILYN:** (*Madilyn smiles.*) That's what best friends are for. That, and bringing your favorite character to life. The Hatter, not Edith. (*They laugh.*) You coming back?

**ANYA:** In a minute. I just want to . . .

**MADILYN:** I understand. I'll be there one day too. We all will. I'll make sure no one else comes out. (*Madilyn begins to exit and then looks back.*) Have fun in Wonderland tonight, Alice. I hear it's a magical place.

*Anya smiles and Edith exits. Anya looks around, deep in thought. She sits down at the edge of the stage and looks out. She holds her chest as if in pain. A light change. Then from stage right, the White Rabbit enters and begins hurrying around on stage. At first Anya doesn't notice, but then the White Rabbit starts speaking.*

**RABBIT:** Dearie, dearie, me oh me. I can't believe I'm late. The Red Queen despises tardiness. I don't wish to anger her. Hope she doesn't take off my head. It's the only one I have.

**ANYA:** (*Anya, who has been watching, gets up and crosses over to the White Rabbit.*) Mardi, what are you doing? (*The White Rabbit freezes.*) Seriously, Mardi, the house is about to open. You can't practice your lines now. Get off the stage.

*The White Rabbit exits. Anya starts to exit the opposite way, but then the White Rabbit enters again and repeats what she just said.*

**RABBIT:** Dearie, dearie, me oh me. I can't believe I'm late. The Red Queen despises tardiness. I hope she—

**ANYA:** (*Anya looks at the White Rabbit.*) Seriously, what are you doing? Are you trying to be funny? (*No answer.*) Answer me. (*The White Rabbit exits. Anya tries to follow.*) Come here, Mardi. (*Looks off the stage.*) What happened to backstage? (*She moves to the other side and music begins to play. She turns back.*) What the - -

*At this point, all of the characters enter and begin dancing a waltz. The Mad Hatter dances with various characters while always keeping an eye on Anya, who has moved to center stage, not understanding what is going on.*

**ANYA:** What are you guys doing? The show's about - -

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*She finally notices the Mad Hatter staring at her. Anya loses track of her until she is right in front of her. The music abruptly stops and the cast freezes, leaving the Mad Hatter and Alice alone center stage.*

**HATTER:** Hello, Alice.

**ANYA:** How did you change so . . . doesn't matter. The show's about to start--

**HATTER:** Dear Alice, the show already started. It's only now that you're a part.

**ANYA:** What?

**HATTER:** Your part. Alice.

**ANYA:** Madilyn, I don't understand what you're --

**HATTER:** Only the mad can understand the world you're in now.

**ANYA:** There's not enough time for this. You know --

**HATTER:** Time is irrelevant. *(Hatter crosses away.)* There is never not enough time, nor is there never too much time, nor is the time just right. There is only time, and you have what you have, whether you like it or not.

**ANYA:** *(Anya looks confused.)* What?

**HATTER:** Tonight . . . there is only you. And you are here. In a world of your own creation. The rest of us are all but puppets.

**ANYA:** If this is a scene, it's not what I wrote.

**HATTER:** Oh, silly girl, it's being written as we speak. *(Touches Alice's head.)* Here. You've been awaiting Wonderland all your life and now . . . it awaits you. All you must do is say goodbye to what you were and hello to what you're meant to be. *(Mad Hatter starts to exit and then turns back.)* By the way, she's giving it to you today. On this day that is like no other.

**ANYA:** Who?

**HATTER:** Your mother.

**ANYA:** Giving me what? *(The Hatter smiles and turns to exit.)* Where are you going?

**HATTER:** Off. Until our paths are meant to cross again. Which will be sooner than you think.

*Claps and the music starts again. Everyone begins dancing and the Mad Hatter joins in. Anya watches them exit and runs over and they have disappeared. Anya takes a moment and then walks downstage.*

**ANYA:** If this is a practical joke, it's the most elaborate I've ever seen. *(The White Rabbit enters in a hurry. Anya watches her.)*

**RABBIT:** Dearie, dearie, me oh me. I can't believe I'm late. The Red Queen despises tardiness. I don't wish to anger her.

**ANYA:** Seriously, Mardi. Again? *(The White Rabbit freezes.)* And now you freeze.

**RABBIT:** *(The White Rabbit looks at her and whispers.)* I don't know what you don't understand. The Mad Hatter made it abundantly clear what you are to do.

**ANYA:** She wasn't clear at all.

**RABBIT:** Because you're not hearing what you've heard.

**ANYA:** How is that possible?

**RABBIT:** You should ask yourself that question. You're the one who's doing it.

**ANYA:** I don't understand.

**RABBIT:** Listen to me. Be that which you are, Alice. Once you do, the pages of the story will commence turning. *(Anya still looks confused.)* Wonderland awaits, my dear.

*The White Rabbit moves away from her, as Anya crosses downstage.*

**ANYA:** Wonderland awaits. Be that which you are. *(She closes her eyes and when she opens them, she is Alice. She runs towards the White Rabbit.)* You there, were you speaking?

**RABBIT:** What a silly question to ask one who was speaking.

**ALICE:** Where am I?

**RABBIT:** You're in my house.

**ALICE:** Fantastic. I must go tell Edith.

**RABBIT:** Oh, you can't. She's not here.

**ALICE:** But she's right outside.

**RABBIT:** She's outside there. You're inside here. My home and . . .  
Wonderland.

**ALICE:** Wonderland?

**RABBIT:** Yes, Wonderland. It's where you are and where you are not.

**ALICE:** That makes no sense.

**RABBIT:** (*White Rabbit looks at her crossly.*) Well, I certainly don't have time to make sense. I'm in a hurry.

**ALICE:** To where?

**RABBIT:** The same place as you. The Palace. Where the Queen of Hearts awaits.

**ALICE:** A queen?

**RABBIT:** Not a queen. The Queen. Of Hearts. I have to admit, she's not happy you're here.

**ALICE:** Why?

**RABBIT:** Because of what was foretold.

**ALICE:** Foretold? Foretold by whom?

**RABBIT:** By those that foretell, I would suppose. In a most important book. Now, I must leave. (*Starts to exit.*) By the way, how are you at croquet?

**ALICE:** I haven't the faintest idea how to play so . . . bad, I would imagine.

**RABBIT:** Oh.

**ALICE:** Why did you say "oh" like that?

**RABBIT:** Because that's the "oh" I intended. (*White Rabbit bows.*) Good day to you. (*Starts to exit and then turns.*) I'll see you there when you're there.

**ALICE:** See me there? Why, this makes absolutely no sense. (*She smiles.*) It's like being trapped in one of my books. (*A Mouse enters with a broom.*) What are you?

**MOUSE:** (*The Mouse looks at her.*) What are you?

**ALICE:** A human.

**MOUSE:** A mouse, I am.

**ALICE:** You're rather large for a mouse.

**MOUSE:** Or are you rather small for a human?

**ALICE:** (*Stares at her for a moment and then crosses away.*) I don't know. I thought I was the usual size, but now that I'm thinking about it . . . perhaps I became smaller and you stayed the same size. That would explain how I fit inside a rabbit's home. But if that's true - -

**MOUSE:** Do you normally do this?

**ALICE:** Do what?

**MOUSE:** Speak to yourself out loud? It's rather odd.

**ALICE:** Considering I've talked to a white rabbit and now a mouse, talking to myself out loud hardly seems odd. *(Pause.)* Do you know why the Queen of Hearts awaits me and not happily?

**MOUSE:** Because she knows.

**ALICE:** Knows what?

**MOUSE:** That which you do not know. Until you do.

**ALICE:** And when will I know?

**MOUSE:** Oh, you'll know when you know.

**ALICE:** But when will that be?

**MOUSE:** When it is.

**ALICE:** I'm starting to believe that no one answers questions here.

**MOUSE:** I'm sorry, dearie. *(She touches her chin.)* So young. It isn't fair. Such a pity.

**ALICE:** Why do you say that?

**MOUSE:** *(Mouse looks at her for a moment, then turns and begins sweeping again.)* The Mad Hatter.

**ALICE:** What?

**MOUSE:** He shall provide answers. At a tea party.

**ALICE:** I do love tea parties.

**MOUSE:** Then be on your way. *(Starts to sweep.)*

**ALICE:** To the tea party?

**MOUSE:** Yes.

**ALICE:** Where is it?

**MOUSE:** Where it is.

**ALICE:** Where's that?

**MOUSE:** Oh, you'll know when you arrive there.

**ALICE:** But how will I arrive there if I don't know - -

**MOUSE:** Oh, you do. Now . . . go.

**ALICE:** But where?

**MOUSE:** Through that door is a start.

**ALICE:** And after that?

**MOUSE:** Wherever your path takes you.

**ALICE:** And I'll get there?

**MOUSE:** Possibly.

**ALICE:** *(Alice collapses to the floor.)* This is much too tiring. I'm going to take a nap.

**MOUSE:** *(Mouse helps her stand.)* No, no, no, child. No time for a nap. It's much too important.

**ALICE:** But how can it be so important when I know nothing about it?

**MOUSE:** *(The mouse looks at her.)* Stop thinking so much. Here . . . we wonder, not think.

**ALICE:** But when you wonder, don't you also think?

**MOUSE:** Not here. Now go through the door to where you're supposed to go.

**ALICE:** *(Alice moves towards the door, then turns and looks back.)* I'm afraid.

**MOUSE:** I would be as well, my child. Your journey, though ending, is only beginning. *(Silence.)* Would you be less afraid if you had two escorts?

**ALICE:** Why, most certainly. Do they know the way?

**MOUSE:** Of course not. They are extremely idiotic.

**ALICE:** That would seem to make their presence not very helpful.

**MOUSE:** Don't judge what you don't know. *(Calls out.)* Tweedle Dee! Tweedle Dum!

*Dee and Dum enter, looking rather ridiculous. Tweedle Dee turns to Tweedle Dum.*

**DEE:** Did you hear my name?

**DUM:** No. But I did hear mine. That's why I came.

**DEE:** How odd.

**DUM:** Odd that I heard my name or odd that I have one?

**DEE:** Both. Neither.

**MOUSE:** I called both your names!

*Dee and Dum look to Mouse.*

**DUM:** Oh, hello, mouse.

**DEE:** Yes, hello, mouse.

**MOUSE:** Hello, you two. Now run along and take Alice to where she's supposed to be.

*Dee and Dum cross to Alice.*

**DEE:** You're - -

**DUM:** Alice?

**ALICE:** I am. Do I know you?

**DUM:** No.

**DEE:** *(At the same time as Dum.)* Yes.

**ALICE:** It can't be both.

**DUM:** You're the one - -

**DEE:** whose coming was foretold.

**ALICE:** That again.

**DEE/DUM:** Yes. You're going to save us from the queen.

**ALICE:** Save you?

*Dee and Dum nod happily as Mouse crosses to them angrily.*

**MOUSE:** Speak of it no more!

**ALICE:** I most certainly think they should if I'm supposed to save them.

**DEE:** Not just us.

**DUM:** All of us.

**MOUSE:** I said no more! *(To Dee and Dum.)* Can you be gone with her now?

**DEE:** Of course.

**DUM:** *(At the same time.)* Never.

**DEE:** Which one of you is Alice?

**ALICE:** Well, I am.

**DEE:** I'm Tweedle Dee.

**DUM:** And I'm Tweedle Dum. We would be delighted to take you on your way.

**ALICE:** But you said "never."

**DUM:** Of course. So shall we be on our way? *(Dee and Dum skip out.)*

**ALICE:** I . . . *(Looks at Mouse.)*

**MOUSE:** Go, child. *(Alice starts to speak.)* At some point, everything will become clear.

**ALICE:** I find that highly doubtful.

**MOUSE:** In the end, you will not.

**ALICE:** The end?

**MOUSE:** Of the journey. Walk it well, though. And experience what is there.

**ALICE:** I don't - -

**MOUSE:** Now, shoo. I have cleaning to do.

*Alice looks at the mouse one more time and then turns to exit. Dee and Dum have reappeared.*

**DEE:** I'm Tweedle Dee.

**DUM:** And I'm Tweedle Dum.

**ALICE:** We've met.

**DEE:** Call me Dee.

**DUM:** Call me Dum.

**ALICE:** Very well.

**DEE:** We should be going.

*Alice stares at them with something akin to a frown.*

**DUM:** But not with a frown.

**DEE/DUM:** With a smile.

*Dee and Dum smile ridiculously and then skip off. Alice watches them go and then smiles.*

**ALICE:** What delightfully odd creatures.

*Alice follows Dee and Dum. Dee and Dum skip off through the audience followed by Alice as the stage begins changing into a forest. Music is playing in the background as the lights fade.*

## SCENE 2

**SETTING:** *Palace Grounds.*

**AT RISE:** *We see the Queen of Hearts with the White Rabbit on the ground in front in her in a squatting position. The Queen takes her mallet and hits the White Rabbit, who hops.*

**QUEEN:** Roll. Not hop.

**RABBIT:** But I'm a rabbit. Rabbits hop.

**QUEEN:** You're not a rabbit. You're a croquet ball. You roll.

**RABBIT:** Yes, my Queen.

*She hits the White Rabbit again, who rolls awkwardly.*

**QUEEN:** You're a terrible ball. Off with your head!

**RABBIT:** No!

**QUEEN:** Yes! *(Rabbit hangs head.)* Not now, though. Later. Unless you redeem yourself.

**RABBIT:** I know something.

**QUEEN:** Tell me.

**RABBIT:** And I won't be beheaded?

**QUEEN:** If you wake up in your burrow tomorrow with your head still attached . . . then the answer must have been yes. If not...

**RABBIT:** She's here.

**QUEEN:** She?

**RABBIT:** Alice.

**QUEEN:** Oh. Are you sure it's her?

**RABBIT:** Yes.

**QUEEN:** Did you show her the way back home?

**RABBIT:** *(Stumbles.)* Er . . . yes, my queen. She refused to go.

**QUEEN:** You're lying. *(Wanders off.)* Why don't any of you understand?

**RABBIT:** What is foretold is foretold, my queen. There's no changing what is to be.

**QUEEN:** Yes, there is! As a matter of fact, I've already started the process with your beloved book. *(The Queen stares at the White Rabbit, who looks stunned.)* That's right. The White Queen possesses it no longer. *(The Queen turns away.)* When will Alice arrive at the palace?

**RABBIT:** Her journey will be indirect, no doubt, but she shall make it in time.

**QUEEN:** *(The Queen looks at him.)* Go get the king.

**RABBIT:** Yes, my Queen.

*The White Rabbit exits and the Queen begins pacing.*

**QUEEN:** So it shall be. Tonight. We meet. *(She sways slightly.)* A slight faint feeling. I demand it to stop.

**KING:** *(The King enters, carrying a bag.)* Demand what to stop?

**QUEEN:** Never you mind.

**KING:** *(The King walks over to her and puts a hand on her shoulder.)*  
You should rest, my queen.

**QUEEN:** *(The Queen moves his hand off her.)* Don't patronize me.

**KING:** *(The King takes a step back.)* Very well. You rang?

**QUEEN:** Did you get the book?

**KING:** I did. *(Hands her the bag. She takes the book out.)* The White Queen will not be happy when she finds it missing.

**QUEEN:** I care very little about the White Queen's feelings. *(Hands the book back.)* Burn it.

**KING:** But that is the history of Wonderland. It's what was, what is, and what is yet to be.

**QUEEN:** I know that. I've decided to write a new version. My own. Where the Red Queen lives happily ever after. Now make sure it is ashes by the time she arrives at the palace.

**KING:** *(The King takes a moment and then realizes what that means.)* She?

**QUEEN:** Alice.

**KING:** She is here then?

**QUEEN:** Yes, she is. You must capture the Hatter before he can talk to her.

**KING:** Yes, my queen. Will you still play her?

**QUEEN:** Of course. If I must.

**KING:** She's destined to win.

**QUEEN:** She won't.

**KING:** But it is - -

**QUEEN:** She won't. And if, by some odd happenstance, she does win, then the sword shall settle it.

**KING:** *(The King crosses to the Queen and places a hand on her shoulder.)* We could leave. You and I. Forsake all of this.

**QUEEN:** *(The Queen looks at him.)* You know we cannot. I must see this through.

**KING:** But your condition - -

**QUEEN:** Will not be spoken of. Now, after burning the book, go arrest the Hatter.

**KING:** Very well. *(Starts to exit.)*

**QUEEN:** Oh, one more thing before you leave. We need new croquet balls. Apparently rabbits don't roll.

**KING:** Very well.

*The King exits as the Queen looks off as the lights fade.*

### SCENE 3

**SETTING:** *Somewhere in the forest.*

**AT RISE:** *The Mad Hatter enters, having a delightful conversation with someone who isn't there. She suddenly begins laughing.*

**HATTER:** Oh, it would appear so. What a deviously humorous fellow. *(Pause.)* What? *(Pause.)* No, it can't be. I thought she . . . oh, very well. So she shall join us then? What about me? Oh. *(Starts laughing.)* Imagine me without a head.

**CAT:** *(Cheshire Cat enters and notices the Hatter.)* Having a delightful conversation are we, Hatter?

**HATTER:** *(Hatter turns around and smiles at him.)* Indeed, kitty kitty. And learning all that he knows. *(Waves.)* Goodbye, dear fellow. *(Turns back to Cheshire Cat.)* And he knows a lot, let me tell you.

*They hear noises and look in the direction of the noise.*

**CAT:** It is the king and the soldier. They are here to capture you.

**HATTER:** I know. It's very silly of them.

**CAT:** Shall you hide?

**HATTER:** No, I shall pretend I am a tree. A Feathermore Tree. *(Holds out an arm.)* Perhaps you should sit upon my branch?

**CAT:** I'll pass. I will watch from afar to see how it turns out though.

**HATTER:** Delightful, I'm sure.

*Cheshire Cat disappears. The King of Hearts enters with a soldier, looking huffy.*

**SOLDIER:** So we are to arrest the Hatter?

**KING:** *(King looks back.)* Yes.

**SOLDIER:** The Queen knows that we will fail, does she not?

**KING:** Yes, but she will not admit it so I, loyal to the end, will do as she wishes. The Hatter poses a great danger to our Queen, as you well know, and he shall prove very hard to find.

**SOLDIER:** *(Soldier looks and sees the Mad Hatter.)* He is right there.

**KING:** No, he's not. He will be well hidden.

**SOLDIER:** Or standing right in front of us.

**KING:** *(The King looks, sees the Hatter, and then crosses over to her.)* Are you the Hatter who is mad?

**HATTER:** No. I am a tree.

**KING:** That is not believable at all. You look nothing like a tree.

**HATTER:** Nor do you. I am, however, a Feathermore Tree. Absent of feathers since I was a seedling.

**KING:** Arrest him.

**SOLDIER:** Yes, sire.

**HATTER:** *(Hatter turns to the King.)* Arresting a Feathermore Tree? Why, that's the most absurd thing I've ever heard.

**KING:** You are the Mad Hatter.

**HATTER:** Are you sure? Or . . . am I a Feathermore Tree disguised as the Hatter? How embarrassing it would be for you to bring the Queen a Feathermore Tree while the Hatter has tea.

**KING:** *(The King turns to Soldier.)* I'm almost sure it is the Hatter. *(The Hatter begins walking away.)* We must - -

**SOLDIER:** He is walking away, sire.

*The King turns and the Hatter stops.*

**HATTER:** Sorry to depart on such short notice, but I have a tea party to attend and an Alice to converse with. *(She skips off.)*

**KING:** Quickly, let's - -

*Dee and Dum appear in the audience.*

**DUM:** Is that her?

**DEE:** There are two of them.

**DUM:** There are two of us.

**DEE:** Do you suppose that we're there - -

**DUM:** and here?

**KING:** Excuse me?

**DEE:** I don't suppose we are.

**DUM:** Then where is she?

**DEE:** I bet you placed her in your pocket.

**DUM:** I don't have a pocket.

**KING:** I said excuse me!

**DEE:** Would you have placed her there if you had one?

**DUM:** I suppose I would have.

**DEE:** It's a shame then that you didn't have one.

**DUM:** Why is that?

**DEE:** Because then we would have known where to look.

**DUM:** Ah. It is a shame.

**KING:** Excuse me? *(Dee and Dum stare at him but do not move. The King turns to the soldier.)* Go retrieve them.

**SOLDIER:** *(The soldier goes and grabs them.)* The King wishes your company. Come.

*Dee and Dum look at each other and then head to go to the King. They stop in front of the King.*

**KING:** You are the roundest things I have ever seen in my life. Very ball like.

**DEE:** Thank you.

**DUM:** *(To Dee.)* You're welcome.

**KING:** How would you two like to be the Queen of Heart's royal croquet balls? *(Dee and Dum begin laughing.)* Why are you laughing?

**DUM:** You said croquet. A delightfully silly word.

**DEE:** So silly.

**KING:** It's not . . . well I suppose it somewhat is, but . . . *(Turns to soldier as Dee and Dum continue their laughter.)* Their laughter . . . I've lost my thoughts.

**SOLDIER:** *(Soldier turns to Dee and Dum.)* The king asked of you how you would like to be the Queen of Heart's royal croquet balls.

**DEE:** Delighted.

**DUM:** *(At the same time.)* Disgusted. *(Pause.)* Let's do it.

**KING:** Hold a minute. Did I hear you say you lost something?

**DUM:** Who are you talking to?

**KING:** You.

**DEE:** But not me?

**KING:** Both of you then.

**DUM:** I thought you were only talking to me.

**KING:** Just answer my question.

**DUM:** Very well. Blue.

**KING:** You lost blue?

**DEE:** I was going to say sparrow.

**KING:** You lost a sparrow?

**SOLDIER:** Perhaps a blue sparrow, sire?

**DEE:** Did we have one - -

**DUM:** To lose?

**KING:** What are you looking for then?

**DEE:** Not a what.

**DUM:** A who.

**DEE/DUM:** Alice.

**KING:** Alice? You were with her?

**DEE/DUM:** We were. We were in charge of taking her.

**KING:** Where?

**DUM:** To a tea party.

**DEE:** To see the Hatter.

**KING:** *(To Soldier.)* Tie them up and take them to the Queen. I have a tea party to attend.

**SOLDIER:** Yes, sire. *(Soldier ties them up.)*

**DEE:** Where are we going?

**SOLDIER:** To the palace.

**DEE:** Can we come too?

**DUM:** I would rather not. *(Pause.)* Let's do it.

**DEE:** Agreed. *(To Soldier.)* Lead on, friend.

*Soldier takes them off. The King starts to walk off and Cheshire Cat enters.*

**CAT:** You're not going to stop the Hatter even when you take her head.

**KING:** *(The King stops and looks at her.)* I most certainly will, cat. The Hatter is no match for me.

**CAT:** *(Cheshire Cat laughs.)* But the tree was, was it not? *(Cheshire Cat begins to laugh. The King grows angry but says nothing.)* No matter what you do, oh mighty king, the Queen of Hearts' reign will come to an end and you will lose your beloved.

**KING:** I have no time to banter with a portly feline, but I promise you that after the Hatter loses her head, your head will be next.

**CAT:** Oh, I lose my head all the time. Or is it my body? Or is it both?

*Cheshire Cat laughs and the King leaves in a huff as Cheshire Cat watches him go. A little time later, music plays. Alice enters.*

**ALICE:** Oh dear, where could they be? Dee? Dum? What ridiculous names. I feel silly even calling them out. I do hope they're okay.

**CAT:** Hello, Alice.

**ALICE:** *(Alice turns.)* You are a cat. A rather large one.

**CAT:** And you are an Alice. A rather small one.

**ALICE:** Alice is only my name. I am a human.

**CAT:** Is that all that you are? A human?

**ALICE:** I suppose.

**CAT:** Then you must be what you suppose, I suppose. Unless you suppose wrong.

**ALICE:** *(Alice stares at her silently and then speaks.)* I don't know how to respond to that so I'm going to continue - -

**CAT:** Your daft escorts are to be the Queen's royal croquet balls in her match with you today.

**ALICE:** Again with croquet. I'm starting to wish I were home.

**CAT:** You are home.

**ALICE:** I am not. My home is 312 Excelsior Lane and - -

**CAT:** That place will be nothing but a distant memory soon. The Queen will see to it.

**ALICE:** Why on Earth would the Queen do such a thing? I've done nothing to her.

**CAT:** What you've done or not done is of no consequence. The Queen does what the Queen does.

**ALICE:** Without rhyme or reason?

**CAT:** Perhaps both. Perhaps neither. It is the Queen's prerogative.

**ALICE:** She sounds very mean.

**CAT:** Oh, she is, but she wasn't always. She once was a delightfully boring queen. To be honest, I much prefer this one.

**ALICE:** Why did she change?

**CAT:** She became . . . diseased.

**ALICE:** Diseased?

**CAT:** Yes . . . diseased.

**ALICE:** But what does this have to do with me?

**CAT:** Much. As you will no doubt find when you meet her. And win or lose, your fate has already been decided. *(Smiles.)* Death awaits you, my dear.

**ALICE:** Death? What's your meaning by that?

**CAT:** One would think the meaning of the word "death" is quite clear.

**ALICE:** I don't believe you.

**CAT:** I don't care what you believe . . . Anya.

**ALICE:** Why did you call me Anya?

**CAT:** Why would I call you Anya?

**ALICE:** I don't know, but you did.

**CAT:** Perhaps you heard what you didn't hear.

**ALICE:** What?

**CAT:** All that it seems is not what it seems and all that is said may not mean what it means.

**ALICE:** I have no idea what you are saying and I grow weary of talking to you. I wish this conversation to cease.

**CAT:** This conversation shall cease when our scene together ends. Which is coming shortly.

**ALICE:** It cannot come soon enough.

**CAT:** But it does, and then it is gone forever. Like all things. *(Silence.)* Like you. Like me. Everything eventually becomes nothing more than a memory that fades away slowly over time until it goes . . . poof. *(Cheshire Cat disappears.)*

**ALICE:** I must find Dee and Dum. If only I knew where to go.

**CAT:** *(Cheshire Cat reappears with only her head showing.)* You'll find that you do. Once you start moving, of course.

**ALICE:** *(Alice looks back but sees nothing. She then turns and is now looking somewhat frightened.)* So I shall.

*An unsure Alice looks around and then decides on a path and exits. Cheshire Cat appears and watches her go and then scampers off. Scene change music starts as the lights fade.*

## SCENE 4

**SETTING:** *The Queen's Throne Room.*

**AT RISE:** *The stage is bare. Queen is sprawled out on the floor, staring at her lack of surroundings. She seems perplexed by what she is seeing.*

**QUEEN:** Rabbit!

**RABBIT:** *(The White Rabbit enters hurriedly.)* Yes, my Queen?

**QUEEN:** What happened to my throne? Or my throne room? I was sitting here in a glorious palace and then everything was gone.

**RABBIT:** I'm sorry, my Queen.

**QUEEN:** No, you're not. *(Silence.)* It's getting worse. All because of that dreadful girl.

**RABBIT:** What's wrong with her is caused by - - *(Queen turns to him.)*

**QUEEN:** Finish that thought and you shall never speak again.

**RABBIT:** *(The White Rabbit looks at her fearfully.)* What shall I do?

**QUEEN:** Fix what is wrong.

**RABBIT:** I can't.

**QUEEN:** Fix what is wrong or suffer the consequences!

**RABBIT:** Yes, your majesty.

*The Rabbit runs off and music starts playing. Things are brought on that don't exactly match the world they are in. They are memories or important things from Anya's life. But they all serve a purpose. This is high energy and frantic. Finally, everything is set. The Queen sits and looks around. The White Rabbit appears by her side.*

**RABBIT:** Is this what you wanted?

**QUEEN:** No. What are these . . . these things you brought?

**RABBIT:** What we found.

**QUEEN:** Where?

**RABBIT:** These . . . items appeared suddenly in the field.

**QUEEN:** Very well. (*Walks around and looks at the items.*) These seem to be mementos of some sort. (*Picks up stuffed animal.*) Stuffed creatures. (*Squeezes it.*) Very soft. (*She discards it and picks up a script, flips through, and then tosses it aside. She then notices a picture. She picks it up.*) A picture. (*She takes a moment. She seems to be affected by the picture. She then gently places it on the ground. Then she sees a chair.*) And I suppose this is my throne. It is quite tiny. Perhaps more fit for a child.

**RABBIT:** It is wonderfully decorated, though.

**QUEEN:** (*She sits and looks at White Rabbit.*) All of this, it's what was written, is it not?

**RABBIT:** Yes.

**QUEEN:** Even though I burned the book, the path remains unaltered.

**RABBIT:** You burned the - - (*The Queen looks up at him.*) What is to be is to be, my Queen.

**QUEEN:** I require you no more. (*White Rabbit exits. Silence.*) I wish to be distracted.

*Soldier enters with Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum.*

**SOLDIER:** Perhaps you will find these fat fellows distracting.

**QUEEN:** (*Queen turns and looks at them.*) What on Earth are they?

**SOLDIER:** Your new croquet balls.

*Dee and Dum laugh but a look from the Queen silences them. Queen stands up and walks over to them. She then pokes them, causing them to laugh.*

**QUEEN:** They are delightfully plump. (*To Dee.*) What is your name?

**DEE:** I'm Tweedle Dee.

**DUM:** And I'm Tweedle Dum.

**QUEEN:** What bizarre names.

**DEE/DUM:** Are you the Queen of Hearts?

**QUEEN:** I am. (*She begins to poke them again, causing them to laugh. To Soldier*) Where is the King?

**SOLDIER:** He's gone after the Hatter.

**QUEEN:** So you failed?

**SOLDIER:** The King shall catch him this time, I have no doubt.

**QUEEN:** I am sure he will.

**SOLDIER:** What else do you require of me?

**QUEEN:** Bring the book's ashes to me.

**SOLDIER:** Yes, your majesty. Do you - - *(The Queen freezes for a moment.)* Queen? *(Soldier walks over to her and begins shaking her. She wakes up and looks at him.)*

**QUEEN:** What are you doing?

**SOLDIER:** You stopped moving.

**QUEEN:** I most certainly did not.

**DEE/DUM:** Oh, you did.

**QUEEN:** I will not discuss this further. *(To Soldier.)* After you bring me the ashes, go and help the King. *(The soldier nods and leaves. Dee and Dum walk over and stare at her.)* What?

**DEE:** You're sad.

**QUEEN:** I am not sad.

**DUM:** But you are.

**QUEEN:** Why would I be sad?

**DEE:** We don't know.

**DUM:** Why would you be sad?

**QUEEN:** *(The Queen, takes a moment, looks at them, and then crosses away.)* If I were sad, and I am not, I would have many reasons to be. The creatures of this kingdom continue roaming around, hoping for what is foretold, though they have no clue what that even means. They are awash in their own ignorance. Yes, it would mean my demise but also . . . someone else's. An innocent. Who did nothing more than come into this foul world. So it is up to me to do what must be done. *(The Queen turns to Dee and Dum and starts manhandling them.)* And let me assure you rotund creatures, I don't care what is written or what is said to be or what is hoped for. At the end of the night, I will still be your queen. *(Dee and Dum take a moment. They then begin laughing and clapping.)* Why are you laughing?

**DUM:** You were tickling us.

**DEE:** How we do love tickles. *(To Dum.)* We should go tell Alice that the Queen was tickling us. *(Dum gets excited and they start to exit.)*

**QUEEN:** I was not tickling you, and you are going nowhere. You fat fellows are to be my croquet balls. *(Dee and Dum start laughing.)*  
Now why are you laughing?

**DEE:** Because you said . . . croquet.

**DUM:** Which is a very silly word.

**QUEEN:** It is not silly.

**DUM:** Oh, it is silly.

**DEE:** And you are too. Silly Queeny.

**QUEEN:** Don't call me Silly Queeny! *(Dee and Dum start to tickle her.)*

**DEE/DUM:** Silly Queeny! Silly Queeny!

*They continue as the Queen starts laughing. Soldier enters and stares.*

**SOLDIER:** Excuse me, your majesty. Your majesty! *(The Queen looks up as they stop.)* Here are the ashes.

**QUEEN:** *(She takes the ashes and looks into the bag.)* Thank you. *(Looks at the ashes.)* Now you go and help the King. He will be at the Hare's house.

**SOLDIER:** The Hare's house?

**QUEEN:** No doubt that will be the location of the tea party. Quickly.

*The soldier exits. The Queen turns around and Dee and Dum, who smile at her.*

**DEE/DUM:** Silly - -

**QUEEN:** Silence! The time for frivolity is over. One of you will be the ball that I will use. To the practice field where I will hit you with a croquet mallet. *(They start laughing.)* It is not silly! Now, roll out of here like balls would.

*They start rolling and laughing as the Queen watches them for a moment. She then exits. Music plays as items are removed and a tea party is set up.*

*BY STEVEN STACK*

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