

Someday in Wonderland

Dramaturgy Packet

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Company Website: scosyoungpeople.org

Video Release: [Someday in Wonderland Vimeo](#)

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About Lewis Carroll

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, was born on January 27th, 1832. He was a mathematician, a deacon, a photographer, and, of course, an author. He was born as the third child (and first son) in a family of 11 children. He grew up entertaining and instructing his younger siblings, including writing and editing family magazines, where he made his first ventures into poetry and prose for children.

Charles was shy and sensitive, even into adulthood, which was probably compounded by his stammer. He completed his mathematics studies in 1852 and began teaching. In 1856, he picked up photography, discovering that he had a knack for photographing people. He often photographed the daughters of his college dean Henry George Liddell: Lorina (Ina), Alice, and Edith. Charles often felt most comfortable in the company of children, telling them fantastical stories. On a boat trip on July 4th, 1862, Charles started telling the girls the story of Alice and her adventures underground, naturally based on Alice Liddell herself.

Alice begged him to write down the stories, and he complied, adding little illustrations. He gave the first little copy of it to Alice for Christmas in 1864. Before this initial gifting, however, Charles had already shared the story with friends, professionals, and children received overwhelmingly positive feedback. In 1863, he met Alexander Macmillan, who soon agreed to publish the book; in early 1864, he sought out *Punch* illustrator John Tenniel for the charming, slightly cartoonish prints. His friend Tom Taylor assisted him with deciding on a name for the book—*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*—and, to keep his privacy, he offered up a list of possible pseudonyms to Macmillan. One of these was his first two names, “Charles Lutwidge” translated into Latin, “Carolus Lodovicus”, then re-anglicized and reversed, becoming “Lewis Carroll”. Macmillan preferred it to the other names.

On July 19th, 1865, the first edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was released. However, John Tenniel was not satisfied with the printing of the illustrations, and the first edition was scrapped. The second edition, and officially first release, was on November 18th, 1865. The book was an immediate success, with the next edition, two printings of 2,000 copies each, released in late 1866. However, it took several years for “Lewis Carroll” to write a sequel. *Through the Looking-Glass* was published as a Christmas book in 1871. Macmillan began by printing 9,000 copies (a much larger print than for *Adventures*), and even so, he had to order an extra 6,000 almost immediately.

The *Alice* books remain one of the most enduring children's series of all time, being translated into over 174 languages and having adaptations. Charles Dodgson died on January 14th, 1898, having left a remarkable footprint on the worlds of literature and mathematics.

The Altered Timeline

Note: The shifts in the timeline were made for two reasons: 1) Elizabeth's story taking place during the London Blitz; 2) seeing Alice as a queen in middle-age.

1901 – *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, as written. Hatter is 10 years old, Alice is 8.

1901-1902 – The Suit of Hearts dies out.

1909 – *Through the Looking Glass*, altered. Hatter is 18 years old, Alice is 16. Alice plays chess as a White Pawn and is crowned a White Queen, deciding to stay in Wonderland.

~1918 – Alice and Hatter are married. The prior generation of White King/Queen steps away.

1923 – Alice and Hatter have twin children, Caloman (Cal) and Clementine (Clem).

1924 – Elizabeth Arlington is born in London, England.

1929 – United States Stock Market crashes, inciting the Great Depression.

1930 – George Arlington is born in London, England.

1939 – World War II begins. General Jack Montgomery, dishonorably discharged, falls down a new rabbit hole into Wonderland. He traps Hatter in a Looking Glass and becomes a fugitive. Alice, heartbroken, goes "sane".

September 1940 – The London Blitz begins.

May 1941 – the events of *Someday in Wonderland*.

A Brief History

The Blitz:

September 7, 1940 – May 11, 1941

An intense bombing offensive by Nazi Germany against Great Britain, with nighttime attacks focused on London and other strategic areas, such as Liverpool, Bristol, Birmingham, and Coventry. Over 43,500 civilians were killed in the Blitz, including 7,736 children, with thousands more wounded. The name “the Blitz” comes from the German *blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war”.

In preparation for the attacks, the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) department created Anderson shelters (named after Sir John Anderson, head of the ARP): small shelters made of corrugated steel, designed to be dug into a household garden and then covered with dirt. These offered protection from shrapnel and debris but would not stand a direct hit. When enemy aircraft was seen approaching, city-wide sirens (controlled by a wire broadcast system via police stations) would play a wailing alarm. When the raid was over, the sirens would play a steady note.

On May 11th, 1941, Hitler called off the Blitz as he shifted his attacks toward the Soviet Union.

Who's Who in Wonderland

Queen Alice – Alice (aka Alice Liddell), the human who ventured into Wonderland at ages 8 and 16. She was crowned a White Queen of Chess at age 16 and never left Wonderland. Wife to the Hatter, mother to Caloman and Clementine.

The Hatter – the Mad Hatter, famously known for his tea parties and nonsensical riddles. Met Alice when he was 10, married her in his late 20s and was subsequently crowned the White King of Chess. Father to Caloman and Clementine.

Caloman Hatter – Cal, the 18-year-old son of Alice and the Hatter. Twin to Clementine.

Clementine Hatter – Clem, the 18-year-old daughter of Alice and the Hatter. Twin to Caloman.

Cheshire Cat – Ches, the chaotically vague mentor and mischief-maker in Wonderland.

Tweedledip – child of Tweedledee. Cousin to Tweedledot; they spend all their time together, often reasoning or arguing with the other. Volunteer (and inept) guard at the Chess Palace.

Tweedledot – child of Tweedledum. The same.

The Butterfly – a blue butterfly, the metamorphized result of the Blue Caterpillar. A mentor and the guardian of a mysterious power.

The White Rabbit – Alice's right-hand rabbit, the herald of the Chess Palace. Aging and exhausted, he can't rush even when he's late.

The White Bunnies – the White Rabbit's grandchildren. Heralds in training at the Chess Palace, always excited to dig new tunnels.

The Card Kings – the Kings of the Spade, Club, and Diamond Suits. They have sat around, bored and hopeless, for 40 years, after the Hearts clan died out; they can no longer play any games except War, which they don't enjoy.

Themes/Motifs

Madness/Sanity

Definitions from the playwrights:

Mad: creative, emotional, exciting, risky

Sane: logical, calm/cold, boring, safe

Furious: explosive emotions and dangerous actions

Someday's version of Wonderland is built on two ideas concerning madness:

- *"We're all mad here."*

Cheshire Cat's original quote from *Adventures* defines how someone gets into Wonderland. Every character that enters Wonderland in *Someday* is mad in some way: Alice and George first enter Wonderland through their childish madness; Montgomery enters during an existential crisis and a delusional dream of victory; Elizabeth enters because when George disappears, she goes mad with worry.

Characters, once they're in Wonderland, can switch between madness and sanity; they will have very different experiences depending on which one they are.

- *"Love makes the sane go mad; heartbreak makes the mad go sane."*

An original quote based on the age-old adage that people in love do unreasonable and unusual things, as well as the acknowledgement that heartbreak can be disillusioning and cause emotional barriers to be put up.

This quote, which Alice attributes to someone from her past (most likely the Caterpillar, the White Rabbit, or the Cheshire Cat), explains the internal plotlines of both Alice and Elizabeth.

Other maxims from *Someday* about madness and sanity include:

A Chess Queen can only move in all directions because she's the maddest of all.

Those who are mad cannot read a book without pictures.

Only one who is sane can be the keeper of the mushroom book and its seeds.

War

Jack Montgomery, a dishonorably discharged United States general, is stuck in Wonderland for the first two years of World War II. His goal in the show is to use the Wonderland cards and the chaos of WWII to promote himself as a dictator and conquer the world.

Thematically, war in *Someday* is perceived as a sane man's device causing furious results.

Card games are often played with the whole deck. Without the Hearts, options are limited. The only game the cards can play in *Someday* is War, which does not depend on a complete deck.

The rules, according to Bicyclecards.com, are explained as such:

The Deal

The deck is divided evenly, with each player receiving 26 cards, dealt one at a time, face down. Anyone may deal first. Each player places their stack of cards face down, in front of them.

The Play

Each player turns up a card at the same time and the player with the higher card takes both cards and puts them, face down, on the bottom of his stack.

If the cards are the same rank, it is War. Each player turns up one card face down and one card face up. The player with the higher cards takes both piles (six cards). If the turned-up cards are again the same rank, each player places another card face down and turns another card face up. The player with the higher card takes all 10 cards, and so on.

How to Keep Score

The game ends when one player has won all the cards.

Other characters comment on war throughout the show:

"Forty thousand people and our Johnny died that day; and the moral of the story is, you ain't to trust the sane." -Cal

"...in war, nobody wins." -the Tweedles

"This wasn't how it was meant to be: dodging bullets instead of playing hide and seek..."
-Elizabeth

"War doesn't end well. It doesn't end at all. Endless circles of losses and gains..."

-the Card Kings

Textual References

All page numbers refer to the Bantam Classic 2006 edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass*.

Pg 2-6 Entrance to Wonderland - Montgomery, George, and Elizabeth all slowly fall down an absurdly long rabbit hole, much as Alice did in the original. The audience sees Elizabeth shrink with the "DRINK ME" potion and unlock a door with the (now very large) key that she sensibly put in her pocket.

Pg 7 Curiouser and Curiouser – Cal and Clem sing a song called "Curiouser", introducing Elizabeth and George to Wonderland.

Pg 15, 43, 53, 66, 124, 143 Various Creatures – the Dodo, Frog, Dormouse, Flamingoes, Hedgehogs, Jabberwock, Jubjub Bird, Bandersnatch, and Bread-and-Butterfly all make an appearance in *Someday*.

Pg 49-51 Cheshire Cat – Elizabeth receives unhelpful directions and a monologue about madness from the Cheshire Cat, similar to Alice's experiences.

Pg 55 Hatter's Watch – the Mad Hatter's watch tells the day, not the hour, infuriating Montgomery, who has crashed the tea party. In the original, the Hatter's watch tells not only the day, but also the year.

Pg 62-63 Painting the Roses Red – 16-year-old Alice discovers the Queen of Hearts' garden deserted, with the roses only half-painted red; in the original, the three gardeners (Five, Seven, and Two) are caught before they can finish painting.

Pg 68 Beheadings – The Hearts clan did kill (or "fold") each other, bringing about Alice's deadly prediction from *Adventures*.

Pg 83, 124, 151-155 Nonsense Poems – In the first *Someday* draft, Tweedledip and Tweedledot annoy Montgomery with a poem called "The Dragonfly and the Katydid", much in the style of "The Whiting and the Snail", "Jabberwocky", and "The Walrus and the Carpenter".

Pg 86 Going Back to Yesterday – In Elizabeth's song "When I Was Young", she sings that she can't go back to yesterday, similar to how Alice tells the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon that she was a different person yesterday.

Pg 109 Chessboard – the final battle (or "World War Wonderland") takes place on the chess field: a large field with checkered squares of light and dark grass. This is a smaller version of the chessboard from *Looking-Glass*, which is a whole countryside made up of large squares of land.

Pg 119 Looking-Glass – Alice enters Wonderland her second time through her Looking-Glass, and Hatter disappears through a Looking-Glass with Cheshire’s “Pour Me” potion; Alice originally went through the Looking-Glass when the glass melted into mist.

Pg 124 Jabberwocky – Elizabeth goes furious when the Hatter goes sane, ripping up mushrooms and quoting lines from “JABBERWOCKY”, originally read in *Looking-Glass*.

Pg 132 Curtsey – Cal and Clem advise Elizabeth and George to curtsey when they meet Queen Alice (the White Queen of Chess); in *Looking-Glass*, the Red Queen tells Alice to curtsey while she thinks, since it saves time.

Pg 141 Nohow – Tweedledip and Tweedledot say “nohow” several times over the course of *Someday*; their fathers, Tweedledee and Tweedledum, are just as fond of the word in *Looking-Glass*.

Pg 177 Un-Birthdays – Unbirthdays are a widely celebrated holiday in *Someday*. Humpty Dumpty first explains the concept to Alice in *Looking-Glass*.

Pg 189 Hatta – Hatter is a name, not simply a title, for the Mad Hatter. *Looking-Glass* confirmed this when referring to the White King’s Messenger (illustrated with a large hat marked “*In this style 10/6*”) by name, “Hatta”.

Pg 210 Queen Alice – In *Someday*, 16-year-old Alice reaches the end of the chessboard (as a pawn) and is crowned a White Queen. The original Alice in *Looking-Glass* does the same.

Sources

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