

# ALICE IN WONDERLAND: URBAN EDITION

A ONE ACT PLAY

By **Burton Bumgarner**

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## **ALICE IN WONDERLAND: URBAN EDITION**

**By Burton Bumgarner**

**SYNOPSIS:** In this wonderful city version of Lewis Carroll's classic story, Alice follows Rabbit down a subway tunnel and encounters a host of strange urbanites, including a Rat, a Caterpillar, a Cook, the Queen of Hearts, and a Grinning Cat. She also encounters subway passengers and joggers who speak in rhyme. After a heated courtroom trial in which the Knave of Hearts is accused of stealing the Queen of Hearts grocery cart, Alice returns safely to the thriving metropolis.

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(3-4 WOMEN; 8-23 EITHER, DOUBLING POSSIBLE)*

STORYTELLER (m/f)  
GRINNING CAT (m/f)  
STAGE MANAGER (m/f)  
CYCLIST (m/f)  
2 SERVERS (m/f)  
RICH PERSON (R.P.) (m/f)  
ALICE (f)  
SKATER (m/f)  
SISTER (f)  
JOGGER (m/f)  
RABBIT (m/f)  
QUEEN OF THE PARK (f)  
RAT (m/f)  
KNAVE OF THE PARK (m/f)  
TRAINER (m/f)  
DR. TURTLE (m/f)  
CATERPILLAR (m/f)  
PASSENGERS (At least 3) (m/f)  
COOK (m/f)  
RUNNERS (At least 3) (m/f)  
DUCHESS (m/f)  
OFFSTAGE VOICE (m/f)  
JUNIOR (m/f)

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The play may be performed on a bare stage, or with a backdrop that indicates a subway, park or other urban setting. Downstage right is a park bench. A podium, formal chair, café table, three café chairs, and sofa or love seat are also used. They may be left upstage, or moved on and off stage.

The play has the “look of the city”. Costuming may be simple: a white hoodie and sweat pants for Rabbit, grey for Rat, green for Caterpillar, brown for Grinning Cat, who may also have cat ears on a headband and whiskers. Alice and Sister could wear jeans, shorts or whatever is fashionable and age appropriate. Storyteller starts off in geeky clothes and changes to something more trendy. The Servers could wear black slacks and white shirts, khakis and polo shirts, or even tuxes. The Cook could wear an apron and chef’s hat. The Duchess should have a polyester “Jersey Girl” look. Junior wears a hoodie that conceals his face, on which he wears a pig’s snout. The Skater should wear skater clothes, the Cyclist cycling attire and a helmet, and the Rich Person (R.P.) business clothes. Both the Queen and Knave are dressed as vagrants, Dr. Turtle wears a lab coat, and the Jogger wears jogging attire.

Most of the roles are not gender specific. Pronouns may be altered to accommodate the actors. Many of the roles may be doubled. If doubling is used, in the “Trial” scene actors may bring their costumes “into the courtroom” and change as their character is called to the stand.

***To Laura Beth Humphrey and the drama students of Robinson Middle School, Kingsport, Tennessee.***

**PROPS**

SCENE 1

- Large storybook
- Glass of water
- Cloth napkin
- Serving tray
- Hoodie or jacket for Storyeller, other 'cool' accessories (sunglasses, knit hat, etc).

SCENE 2

- Cell phone
- Magazine
- Subway sign
- Glove
- Newspapers, magazines, iPods, etc. for Passengers

SCENE 3

- Glove
- Cell phone
- Large tray with peanut butter cup or other small candy, coffee cup, order pad for Server

SCENE 4

- Cell phone

SCENE 5

- Sports whistle
- DVD case
- Paperback book

SCENE 6

- Several pieces of luggage
- Jar of mushrooms

SCENE 7

- Video game
- Cooking pot with lid
- Stirring spoon (ladle)
- Cell phone
- Jar of pepper
- Large jar
- Bucket
- Grocery bag with 3 spice jars
- Mayonnaise jar
- Glove
- Soup bowl
- Spoon

SCENE 8

- Magazine
- Wall Street Journal
- iPod
- Serving tray with 3 coffee cups
- Server's pad and pencil

SCENE 9

- Shopping cart (either a grocery cart or a hand cart)
- Paper crown
- A browine
- Golf club
- Mini muffin
- Back pack
- Shoe
- 4 liter bottle of Dr. Pepper
- Old phone
- Old t-shirt
- Diploma
- McDonalds bag
- Waffle
- Barbie doll
- Map (*other items may be used in the shopping cart*)

SCENE 10

- Clipboard and pen
- Gavel
- Server's order pads

SCENE 11

- Magazine
- Grocery cart

DO NOT COPY

**AT RISE:**

*The play may be performed on a bare stage, or with a backdrop that indicates a graffiti wall, a subway or other urban environment. Downstage right is a park bench. Downstage center is a podium. Upstage is a formal chair, a café table and three café chairs, and a sofa or love seat which will be moved upstage and downstage during the play.*

**SCENE 1: STORYTELLER AND STAGE MANAGER**

*STORYTELLER enters left, carrying a large book, and crosses to the podium. HE smiles, opens the book, clears his throat several times, and looks offstage left. SERVER 1 enters left with a glass of water on a serving tray. SERVER 2 enters behind SERVER 1 with a cloth napkin. SERVER 1 hands STORYTELLER 1 the glass. STORYTELLER drinks some water, then sloshes water around in his mouth and gargles. HE hands SERVER 1 the glass. SERVER 2 wipes STORYTELLER's mouth with the napkin.*

**SERVER 2:** Man, that's gross!

*SERVERS exit.*

**STORYTELLER:** *(Reads to audience from the book ala kindergarten teacher.)* "Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, and what is the use of a book, thought Alice, without pictures or conversation?"

*STAGE MANAGER enters and crosses to STORYTELLER.*

**STAGE MANAGER:** Excuse me.

**STORYTELLER:** What?

**STAGE MANAGER:** Well ... I don't know how to say this ... but the director wants to replace you.

**STORYTELLER:** Why?

**STAGE MANAGER:** You're about as interesting as watching paint dry.

**STORYTELLER:** But I'm a professional storyteller!

**STAGE MANAGER:** Maybe so, but the director wants a version that has street smarts.

**STORYTELLER:** Street smarts? We're talking about "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland!" Not "Law and Order!" (Or other familiar urban-setting story.)

**STAGE MANAGER:** Sorry.

**STORYTELLER:** (*Begs on hands and knees.*) Please don't replace me! My Aunt Hilda came all the way from Cleveland (Or other location.) just to see me!

**STAGE MANAGER:** Look man, I only work here.

**STORYTELLER:** I won't be boring anymore! I promise! And I can make the story really interesting, and up to date.

**STAGE MANAGER:** I doubt that.

**STORYTELLER:** I'll prove it! Watch! (*Snaps fingers. SERVERS enter carrying a hoodie or jacket, sunglasses, and other "cool" accessories. STORYTELLER removes his jacket and glasses and puts on the new accessories. SERVERS exit with the podium and book.*) What'd ya think?

**STAGE MANAGER:** I think you're weird.

**STORYTELLER:** (*To audience.*) Okay, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, cats and dogs, Klingons and Vulcans ... (*To STAGE MANAGER.*) who else?

**STAGE MANAGER:** M and M's?

**STORYTELLER:** Right! You're gonna see the street-smart story of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

**STAGE MANAGER:** You can't be serious.

**STORYTELLER:** You're in the way. (*Shoves STAGE MANAGER off stage. To audience.*) One really fine Saturday morning Alice and her Sister went to the park. They'd been hanging around the house all morning and their mama was sick of their sass.

**SCENE 2: DOWN THE SUBWAY**

**AT RISE:**

*ALICE and SISTER enter right and sit on the bench. SISTER is talking on her cell phone. A magazine is in her lap. ALICE tries to get her attention.*

**STORYTELLER:** Sister's kind of ticked because she's supposed to look after Alice instead of hopping on a crosstown train and hanging out with her friends. And Alice's kind of ticked because she wants a little attention and respect, and she ain't getting it. What happens is pretty weird. (*STORYTELLER exits left.*)

**SISTER:** (*On phone.*) I can't hang out with you. I'm stuck with Alice all afternoon.

**ALICE:** You're not stuck with me!

**SISTER:** (*On phone.*) I have to babysit.

**ALICE:** I don't need a babysitter!

**SISTER:** (*On phone.*) She was driving me crazy so I brought her to the park.

**ALICE:** I'm not driving you crazy!

**SISTER:** (*On phone.*) Little sisters are a real pain.

**ALICE:** I'm not a pain!

**SISTER:** (*To ALICE.*) If you don't shut your yap I'm going to feed you to the pigeons!

*ALICE pouts.*

**ALICE:** How are you going to do that?

**SISTER:** (*On phone.*) I'll talk to you later. (*Hangs up phone and tries to read her magazine.*)

**ALICE:** Can we go to the movies?

**SISTER:** No.

**ALICE:** Can we get some bagels?

**SISTER:** No.

**ALICE:** Can we feed the ducks?

**SISTER:** No.

**ALICE:** Can we ...?

**SISTER:** No.

**ALICE:** This is boring.

**SISTER:** It sure is. *(Cell phone rings. SISTER looks at caller ID.)* I'm going over there by the yogurt stand. *(Indicates offstage right.)* I won't take my eyes off of you. If you're good I'll bring you back a chocolate yogurt. If not, I'll bring back a chocolate yogurt and eat it in front of you.

*SISTER answers her phone and exits right, leaving the magazine. ALICE looks at the magazine, then tosses it down.*

**ALICE:** This is really boring. *(Looks around, pouts, then yawns.)* I wish there was something to do.

*RABBIT enters right and crosses to ALICE walking and talking very quickly.*

**RABBIT:** Late again! Always late! I can never be on time! That's the story of my life! I hate being late! *(To ALICE.)* Do you have the correct time?

*ALICE looks at her watch.*

**ALICE:** It's ten o'clock.

**RABBIT:** Why am I always late? Late is bad! On time is good! Early is better!

**ALICE:** What are you late for?

**RABBIT:** An appointment you silly little person! Which way to the uptown train? *(ALICE points left.)* Which way to the downtown train? *(ALICE points left.)* Which way to the crosstown train? *(ALICE points left.)* How do I know you're telling the truth?

**ALICE:** Do you see the sign that says "subway"?

**RABBIT:** *(Looking left.)* What sign? *(STAGE MANAGER enters left holding a sign that says "Subway." HE points left.)* Oh. That sign.

**ALICE:** Unless the sign's wrong, that's the subway. You can go uptown, downtown or crosstown.

**RABBIT:** Okay, here's a tricky question. Which way is the airport?  
(*ALICE points upstage. Very excited.*) I mean the airport in Tokyo!  
Hah! Gotcha didn't I? (*Very calm.*) I would thank you for your  
help, but I don't have time. I'm late. (*Quickly exits left, dropping a  
glove.*)

**ALICE:** Wait! You dropped something! (*Exits left.*)

*STAGE MANAGER runs right and stands with the sign and points  
right. After a count RABBIT enters left and quickly crosses right.*

**RABBIT:** I know what they'll say! Late again! Always late! Never on  
time! (*Exits right.*)

*ALICE enters left and quickly crosses right.*

**ALICE:** Wait! You dropped your glove! (*Exits right.*)

*STAGE MANAGER points left. After a count RABBIT enters right and  
quickly crosses left.*

**RABBIT:** Late! Late! Late! Late! Late! (*Etc. Exits left.*)

*ALICE enters and crosses center. PASSENGERS enter right and left  
with chairs, newspapers, magazines, iPods, etc. Chairs are arranged  
center in rows to resemble a subway car. THEY sit, read, sleep, look  
bored, talk unheard on cell phones, etc.*

**ALICE:** The subway? I'm not supposed to ride the subway by  
myself! (*To PASSENGER 1.*) Excuse me. Is this an uptown train?

**PASSENGER 1:**

"The time has come," the Walrus said,

"To talk of many things:

Of shoes – and ships – and sealing wax –

Of cabbages – and kings –

And why the sea is boiling hot –

And whether pigs have wings."

**ALICE:** What? (*To PASSENGER 2.*) What is he talking about?

**PASSENGER 2:**

In summer when the days are long,  
Perhaps you'll understand the song:  
In autumn when the leaves are brown,  
Take pen and ink and write it down.

**ALICE:** That doesn't make any sense!

**PASSENGER 3:**

The train, the train goes underground,  
And up above there is the town.  
Down below is rock and dirt.  
Careful, or you might be hurt.

**OFF STAGE VOICE:** This train has reached the end of the line! You must exit!

*STAGE MANAGER enters with a sign that says "Exit". ALL PASSENGERS exit right and left, leaving ALICE center. STAGE MANAGER and ALICE exit left.*

### SCENE 3: SERVERS

*The SERVERS enter right. THEY move the café table and two chairs downstage center. THEY exit left and return with ALICE.*

**SERVER 1:** Your table is ready, madame.

**ALICE:** I didn't ask for a table.

**SERVER 2:** (*Rudely.*) You're wasting our time! Sit down! (*ALICE sits.*) Now what ya want?

**SERVER 1:** (*To SERVER 2.*) Allow me. (*To ALICE.*) We are at your service, madame. What do you desire?

**ALICE:** I ... I ... uh ... don't know.

**SERVER 1:** May I recommend the pigeon pie.

**ALICE:** (*Grossed out.*) I don't think so.

**SERVER 1:** Perhaps the earthworm quiche. The robins really love that one.

**ALICE:** Earthworm quiche?

**SERVER 1:** We also have excellent mud pies. Made with real mud.

**SERVER 2:** She's just wasting our time!

**ALICE:** I don't have any money. I came to the park with my sister and tried to give this glove back to a man in a white hoodie.

*SHE holds up the glove. SERVER 1 takes it.*

**SERVER 1:** This will go well in the soup.

**ALICE:** It's not yours!

**SERVER 1:** I know just what you need. You'll love it!

**SERVER 2:** She's not going to like it!

*SERVERS exit left. ALICE takes a cell phone from her pocket and dials. SISTER enters right talking on her cell phone.*

**SISTER:** Alice I'm talking to someone else! Leave me alone!  
(Pushes a phone button.) Where were we? Oh yes ... *(Exits right.)*

**ALICE:** Wait! I went in the subway and I'm not sure where I am! ...  
Hello?

*SERVERS enter. SERVER 2 carries a large serving tray with a peanut butter cup or other small candy and a coffee cup. SERVER 1 serves ALICE the candy with a great flourish.*

**SERVER 1:** Your lunch, madame.

**SERVER 2:** I bet she doesn't like it!

**SERVER 1:** The chef's special tea cake that came all the way from  
England.

**ALICE:** That's a peanut butter cup.

**SERVER 2:** I told you she wouldn't like it!

**ALICE:** I like peanut butter cups.

**SERVER 2:** Then eat it!

*ALICE quickly eats the candy.*

**SERVER 1:** Isn't it simply delicious? *(ALICE nods.)* This is special  
coffee. *(SERVES the coffee.)*

**ALICE:** I don't like coffee.

**SERVER 2:** I knew she wouldn't like it!

**SERVER 1:** This is a very rare coffee made with beans from the highest altitudes of the Himalayas, harvested by monks who carry the beans in backpacks through the blinding snow and unbearable cold. It travels on the backs of camels through the blinding sandstorms of the Sahara, on river boats up the pirana-plagued waters of the Amazon, in the pouches of kangaroos across the Australian outback, through the swamps of south Florida ...

**SERVER 2:** He's making it up. It comes out of a can.

**SERVER 1:** You really should try it.

**ALICE:** Okay. *(SHE sips it, then makes a sour face.)*

**SERVER 1:** What do you think?

**ALICE:** It's really bitter.

**SERVER 1:** Well, I didn't say it was good. *(To SERVER 2.)* The bill.

*SERVER 2 takes a pad and pencil from his pocket and writes.*

**SERVER 2:** Let's see. A peanut butter cup and some cheap coffee. That'll be a thousand dollars.

*SERVER 2 tears off a slip of paper and hands it to SERVER 1, who hands it to ALICE.*

**ALICE:** *(Horried.)* I don't have a thousand dollars! I don't have any money at all! I told you that!

**SERVER 2:** I knew it! Cheap person!

**SERVER 1:** Then we'll just be on our way.

*SERVERS exit.*

**ALICE:** I told you I didn't have any money! *(Yawns.)* I'm getting sleepy. *(SHE puts her head down on the table and goes to sleep.)*

#### SCENE 4: RAT

*RAT enters and sits at the table.*

**RAT:** You look like something the cat tried to eat.

**ALICE:** *(Sits up startled.)* What?

**RAT:** I say that as someone who is very familiar with what the cat tried to eat. The cat tried to eat my entire family.

**ALICE:** That's horrible!

**RAT:** It's okay. We're rats.

**ALICE:** You're awfully big for a rat.

**RAT:** Maybe you're awfully small for a ... what are you?

**ALICE:** I'm a person.

**RAT:** Then you're definitely small ... or maybe I'm large. Either way, what are you doing here?

**ALICE:** A couple of waiters tried to charge me a thousand dollars for a peanut butter cup and some nasty coffee.

**RAT:** I know those guys. They tried to put me in a casserole. And I thought the cat was bad.

**ALICE:** I should go back to the bench and wait for my sister. *(Stands, crosses left, then right.)* I don't know where I am!

**RAT:** That makes one of us.

**ALICE:** *(Distressed.)* I'm always supposed to be where my sister can see me! What am I going to do?

**RAT:** Whenever I'm stressed out I gnaw on electrical wire. Gives me a real charge. *(Laughs.)* Get it? A real charge!

**ALICE:** I've got to find my sister! I'm lost!

*RAT escorts ALICE to a chair.*

**RAT:** Sit down. Relax. Take some deep breaths. Do you not like my company?

**ALICE:** I guess you're okay.

**RAT:** I'm not just okay. I'm excellent. What's your name?

**ALICE:** Alice.

**RAT:** What's your favorite color?

**ALICE:** Green. What's your favorite color?

**RAT:** My favorite color is a light shade of ochre with a hint of fushia, a touch of violet and a tiny swirl of amber. But it really doesn't matter. I'm color blind. Now here is a very important question. Perhaps the most important question you've ever been asked. Are you ready?

**ALICE:** I think so.

**RAT:** Okay. Here goes. Brace yourself. *(Clears throat and makes a production of preparing to speak.)* What is the genus and specie of the wombat?

**ALICE:** What?

**RAT:** You heard me. The wombat. A native of New South Wales. A stocky little creature that resembles a bear.

**ALICE:** I have no idea.

**RAT:** You really don't know your marsupials, do you? Okay. Here's an easier question. What is the distance from the equator to seventy-five degrees latitude?

**ALICE:** I don't know.

**RAT:** Geography isn't your strong suit either. How about this? This is really easy. Who won the battle of Agincourt?

**ALICE:** I never heard of the battle of whatever-you-said!

**RAT:** You think just because I'm a bacterially infected rodent that I'm ignorant! Well, you're wrong! *(Stands.)* Maybe next time you'll think twice before you call an exterminator! Maybe that rat that you saw rooting through your garbage is also an expert on Shakespeare, or chemistry, or quantum physics!

**ALICE:** I don't know what you're talking about!

**RAT:** I'm talking about the right for a rat to live a life of happiness and fulfilment without cats! And without people thinking we're nasty ... even though we are! Am I upsetting you, little girl?

**ALICE:** Yes, you are!

**RAT:** Well, cry me a river!

*RAT exits right. ALICE leans over about to cry. SERVERS enter left and pull ALICE from the chair.*

**SERVER 1:** Sorry. We need these for paying customers.

**SERVER 2:** You ungrateful person!

*SERVERS take the table and chairs and exit left. ALICE tries her cell phone.*

**ALICE:** No signal! *(SHE sits on the floor and sobs.)*

**SCENE 5: CAUCUS RACE**

*TRAINER enters left and crosses to ALICE.*

**TRAINER:** Hi there. You look kind of sad. Know what will cheer you up? A good physical work out. (*Blows sports whistle startling ALICE.*) Okay! On your feet! (*Does jumping jacks, runs in place, etc.*) Let's get that cardiovascular system pumped up! Let's burn those carbs! Let's build those abs! LET'S FEEL THE PAIN, BABY! (*TRAINER stops.*) I take it you're not into physical fitness.

**ALICE:** I'm not in the mood right now.

**TRAINER:** So, what's the problem?

**ALICE:** I was insulted by a rat, a couple of servers took away the chair, my cell phone doesn't get a signal and I can't find my sister. (*Indicates off stage right.*) She's supposed to be beside the yogurt stand, but there isn't a yogurt stand anymore. Everything's changed.

**TRAINER:** Wow. That's almost interesting. Say, I know what would cheer you up. (*Takes a DVD from pocket.*) You can purchase my brand new slightly used DVD "Getting in Shape and Looking Silly." I'm an expert at both. This amazing offer is only \$19.95, and if you act now you'll receive absolutely free (*Takes a paperback from pocket.*) my "Guide to Inappropriate Remarks for All Occasions." See, in spite of my great physique, I'm not very smart, and sometimes I just can't come up with the wrong thing to say.

**ALICE:** You seem intelligent enough to me.

**TRAINER:** Do you really think so? Wow! That's the nicest thing anyone's said to me. (*Sits beside ALICE.*) I've had a very difficult life. At least it would have been difficult if I'd been intelligent enough to know how difficult it was. It all started with my ancestors. Our family crest is the dodo.

**ALICE:** Dodo?

**TRAINER:** Yes. An extinct bird known for its lack of common sense and basic survival skills. That kind of sums up my family, except we're not extinct yet. I figure as long as we're going to be foolish and ignorant why not get in shape. So I operate Dodo's Gym, specializing in personal training for the truly dim-witted.

**ALICE:** Do you have a lot of customers?

**TRAINER:** I don't know. I never noticed. I have learned that if you ignore your problems they'll go away.

**ALICE:** But don't they come back?

**TRAINER:** Yes, they do. But you've had some peace and quiet without them. Now, what can I do to cheer you up?

**ALICE:** Can you help me find my way back to the park?

**TRAINER:** I'm not good with directions.

**ALICE:** Can you help me find my sister?

**TRAINER:** That would be another negative.

**ALICE:** *(Sobs.)* I don't know what to do!

**TRAINER:** I know! We'll have a caucus race! That'll be fun!

*TRAINER jumps up and pulls ALICE to her feet.*

**ALICE:** Uh ... what's a caucus race?

**TRAINER:** You'll love it! We need some runners. I'll see if I can find any. *(Crosses left and yells offstage.)* CAUCUS RACE!

*RUNNERS enter left.*

**RUNNERS:** *(Random.)* All right! Caucus race! Can't wait!  
*(Cheering, whistling, etc.)*

**TRAINER:** Is everyone ready?

**RUNNERS:** YEAH!

**TRAINER:** Okay ... Ready ... Set ...

**ALICE:** Wait! I don't know the rules.

**RUNNER 1:** I don't either.

**RUNNER 2:** Me either.

**RUNNER 3:** I don't think I was ever in a caucus race.

**TRAINER:** Okay. I'll show you. Watch carefully. I'm going to walk off the course. *(TRAINER walks in a large circle around the stage.)* Now. Did everyone see the circle I made? *(ALL nod.)* When I say GO everyone runs, but no one goes outside of the circle. Does everyone understand? *(ALL nod.)* Good. Ready. Set. GO! *(ALL but ALICE and TRAINER run around aimlessly in the circle.)* Isn't this fun? I can't wait to find out who wins.

**ALICE:** What's the point?

**TRAINER:** The point is to win the race. What a silly question. And I'm an expert on silly questions ... and meaningless answers.

**ALICE:** How will you know who wins?

**TRAINER:** I'll show you. (*Blows whistle. Shouts.*) Okay! The race is over!

*ALL stop, exhausted.*

**RUNNER 1:** I'm exhausted.

**RUNNER 2:** Me, too. That was the hardest I've ever run in my life.

**RUNNER 3:** That was some race, wasn't it?

**RUNNERS:** IT SURE WAS!

**ALICE:** But who won?

*RUNNERS scratch their heads in confusion.*

**TRAINER:** Hmm. How about this. Everybody won!

*RUNNERS cheer.*

**RUNNER 1:** What about prizes?

**RUNNER 2:** Yeah. We gotta have prizes!

**RUNNER 3:** The winner always gets a prize.

**TRAINER:** I didn't think about prizes.

**RUNNERS:** (*Chanting.*) PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!

**TRAINER:** This whole thing was her idea! (*Indicates ALICE.*) She has the prizes!

**RUNNER 1:** Give me a prize!

**RUNNER 2:** Give ME a prize!

**RUNNER 3:** Give me a bigger prize than them!

**ALICE:** I don't have any prizes!

**TRAINER:** No prizes? (*ALICE shakes her head.*) Then you've wasted our time.

**RUNNER 1:** What a rip off!

**RUNNER 2:** I'll say!

**RUNNER 3:** All that racing ... and for nothing! (*RUNNERS exit left, grumbling.*)

**ALICE:** Why did you tell them I'd give them a prize?

**TRAINER:** I told you I wasn't very smart! And I'm glad I could help.  
(*TRAINER exits left.*)

## SCENE 6: RABBIT AND CATERPILLAR

*RABBIT enters right and crosses to ALICE.*

**RABBIT:** There you are. I've been looking everywhere for you. You can take my luggage to the hotel suite. My tuxedo is to go to the dry cleaners, and you are to take my sweat pants and hoodies to the laundry mat. For dinner I will have carrot cake, followed by carrot stew and a glass of carrot juice. Carrots on the half shell would make a nice appetizer. Well? Get on with it!

*HE points right. ALICE exits right and returns with an armful of luggage.*

**ALICE:** Where do you want this?

**RABBIT:** Don't you listen? What is with servants these days?

**ALICE:** I'm not your servant!

**RABBIT:** Then why are you carrying my luggage? Hurry up! I'm late!

*RABBIT exits left, followed by ALICE. CATERPILLAR enters right, sits in lotus position and meditates.*

**ALICE:** (*Off stage.*) I'm not carrying your luggage! (*Crashing sound as SHE drops the luggage. SHE enters not watching where SHE's going, and trips over CATERPILLAR.*) Oh. Excuse me. Do you know how to get to the park?

**CATERPILLAR:**

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,  
"And your hair has become very white;  
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –  
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

**ALICE:** What?

**CATERPILLAR:**

“In my youth,” Father William replied to his son,  
“I feared it might injure the brain;  
But, now that I’m perfectly sure I have none,  
Why, I do it again and again.”

**ALICE:** Are you alright?

**CATERPILLAR:** Perfectly. I have been sitting on this mushroom for weeks ... well, for days ... actually I just said down ... but I’ve been contemplating the meaning of my existence and the existence of my meaning. You may join me if you wish, or you may wish if you join me.

*ALICE slowly sits beside CATERPILLAR.*

**ALICE:** What do I do?

**CATERPILLAR:** Empty your mind of all negative energy. And empty your energy of your negative mind. Like this. (*Closes eyes and chants.*) Ommm. Ommm.

*ALICE tries joining in.*

**ALICE:** Ommm. Ommm. (*SHE stops.*)

**CATERPILLAR:** Did you reach a higher plain of awareness?

**ALICE:** No. I feel silly, and I’m afraid someone’s going to see me.

**CATERPILLAR:** If you were in alignment you wouldn’t care what anyone thought. And if you thought you wouldn’t be in alignment. You’d be creating the poetry of the cosmos, and the cosmos of poetry. Would you care for a mushroom? (*HE takes a jar of mushrooms from his pocket, opens it and offers it to ALICE.*)

**ALICE:** You eat them out of the jar?

**CATERPILLAR:** How do you eat them?

**ALICE:** On pizza.

**CATERPILLAR:** Have one. (*HE hands her the jar. SHE sniffs, wrinkles up her nose and hands it back.*) Go on. They’re delicious.

*SHE reluctantly takes a mushroom and eats it, making a sour face.*

**ALICE:** It’s kind of boring.

*HE eats a mushroom and returns the jar to his pocket.*

**CATERPILLAR:** You're welcome. Now, for another poem. You'll love this one.

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright –  
And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.

**ALICE:** That's kind of ... unusual.

**CATERPILLAR:** There's more.

The moon was shining sulkily,  
Because she thought the sun  
Had got no business to be there  
After the day was done –  
"It's very rude of him," she said,  
"To come and spoil the fun!"

**ALICE:** Could you give me directions to the park?

**CATERPILLAR:** It's all a state of mind, and a mind of state.

**ALICE:** (*Standing.*) I think I'll be running along now.

**CATERPILLAR:** But you need to recite a poem.

**ALICE:** I don't know any poems.

**CATERPILLAR:** Close your eyes and concentrate. (*ALICE closes her eyes.*) Think about words that rhyme and rhymes that word. Think about the rhythm of language and the language of rhythm. Listen to the beating of your heart. That's a hard one for caterpillars. We don't have beating hearts.

**ALICE:** Okay. Now what?

**CATERPILLAR:** Respond with poetry. Say the first words that enter your mind.

**ALICE:** Uh ... Twinkle, twinkle little star / How I wonder what you are ...

**CATERPILLAR:** Boring!

*ALICE opens her eyes.*

**ALICE:** You said the first thing that enters my mind!

**CATERPILLAR:** Obviously I gave you more credit than you deserve, and more deserve than you credit!

**ALICE:** *(Insulted.)* Well, I'm sorry!

**CATERPILLAR:** I don't have time for you. I'm about to enter a greater level of existence, and an existent level of greater. And you're not part of it! *(SHE quickly exits right.)* What a strange little person. I believe I'll find another mushroom on which to sit. *(CATERPILLAR exits left.)*

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