Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There Short Guide

Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There by Lewis Carroll

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The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites".

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers".

BOOKRAGS

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Overview

In 1871, Macmillan published Carroll's novel, Through the Looking-Glass. John Tenniel illustrated this sequel as well as the earlier novel Alice in Wonderland.

Carroll's imagination takes readers with Alice into Looking-glass House. He fills the novel with situations from the ordinary to the extraordinary; the mundane to the silly, using the game of chess as the setting.

About the Author

Born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (pro-nounced "Dod-son") on January 27, 1832, in Daresbury, Cheshire, Lewis Carroll was the eldest son of Reverend Charles Dodgson and Frances Jane Lutwidge. His parents were socially well-connected cousins who belonged to families with strong traditions of service to the Anglican Church and to the Crown. Together they had four sons, including Carroll, and seven daughters.

Carroll's father, Rector of Daresbury, held a zealous sense of obligation for the church. He worked for the parish poor, ran a Sunday school, organized lectures, increased the congregation's size, and started a mission among the barge folk working on a canal. As a classical scholar, Carroll's fatherpublished religious books and became the appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Ripon. Later he became the Bishop of Ripon and finally a Canon of Ripon Cathedral. A powerful figure, Carroll's "Papa" bestowed on him a sense of wit and humor, the significance of deep faithfulness, and good judgment in business.

Carroll's "Mama," Frances Jane Lutwidge, was a very sweet and gentle woman. Her letters to Carroll flowed with affection. Her gentleness balanced the sterner qualities of her husband. According to John Pudney in Lewis Carroll and His World, some believe that Carroll's mother brought to his life the daydreams that never left him, thus contributing to his success with fairy-tales.

As a child, Carroll made pets of odd and unlikely animals, including snails and toads.

It is not surprising that he developed the interesting and unusual creatures found in his fairy-tales.

In the Rectory grounds where Carroll grew, he devised a railway game for his siblings. He built the train using a wheelbarrow, a barrel, and a small truck. He placed stations at intervals in the gardens, and wrote rules to govern station use. His fascination with railways appears in Through the Looking-Glass, when Alice suddenly finds herself in the railway carriage without a ticket. "A Goat that was sitting next to the gentleman in white, shut his eyes, and said in a loud voice, 'she ought to know her way to the ticket-office, even if she doesn't know her alphabet!'"

At the age of twelve, Carroll was sent to boarding school in Richmond, where he composed Latin verses and wrote stories for the school magazine.

Carroll, almost six-feet tall and slender, inherited his father's handsome face. He dressed neatly, wore an overcoat, and a top hat. Obsessed with the need for gloves, he wore them outdoors both summer and winter.

He attended Rugby School in 1846 and excelled in his studies. In 1850, he entered Christ Church College, Oxford. His stutter prevented him from following in his father's career as a clergyman. Instead, he spent his life teaching and occasionally preached a sermon. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oxford University, in 1854. The

following year, he became "Master of the House." His duties included lecturing in mathematics and teaching private pupils.

In 1856, the younger Charles Dodgson adopted his pen name from the Latin forms of his first and middle names. Dodgson became Lewis Carroll, a master of "nonsense" verse, fairy tales, and mathematical puzzles. Carroll earned a Master of Arts in 1857 and continued to teach at Christ Church, Oxford, where he remained for the rest of his life as a mathematics faculty member.

The Church of England ordained Carroll as a Deacon in 1861. He authored books for children, mathematical treatises, and invented games of mathematics and logic. He became an amateur artist, illustrator, and portrait photographer, particularly of children. Carroll contributed to a small paper, The Comic Times, which later became The Train.

In December 1867, Carroll met eightyear-old Alice Theodora Raikes, the eldest daughter of friend Henry Cecil Raikes, during a visit to Onslow Square, London. They met in the garden behind the house where Carroll walked, according to John Pudney in Lewis Carroll and His World.

He asked Alice to his home where she saw a tall mirror standing in one corner. He put an orange in her right hand, asked her to look into the mirror, and then asked her which hand held the orange. She replied "The left hand." Baffled she said "If I was on the other side of the glass, wouldn't the orange still be in my right hand?" Carroll laughed, saying that's "the best answer I've had yet."

Inspired by this interaction with Alice Raikes, Carroll began the story Through the Looking-Glass. As Carroll developed Through the Looking-Glass over the next few years, he insisted on "'reverse' printing .. . such as you hold up to the looking-glass to read."

Always a bachelor, Carroll followed a routine that included taking long country walks, telling his companions stories, and explaining logical problems. He took emotionally uplifting river excursions, played games of croquet, and took a few trips to the north and one visit to Russia—the only trip abroad.

The author wrote and published throughout his life, driving his talents and his pen hard. He lived simply and distributed his income where it could assist children to go on stage or help friends in need.

Carroll died from influenza on January 27, 1898 and is buried in the Old Guildford Cemetery. The white cross on his grave says, "Thy Will Be Done." At the suggestion of a young friend, Children's Hospital donated a crib in his memory.

Characters

Carroll develops Alice, an adventurous seven-and-a-half-year-old protagonist, as the prominent character. Carroll employs thirdperson limited point of view as he defines her imaginative, chatty, and self-scolding temperament He discloses Alice's thoughts through conversation as well as inner dialogue. For example, as the story opens, Alice chats with one of Dinah's kittens, "pretending that the kitten was speaking."

This dialogue illustrates Alice's imagination and playfulness. Alice describes the chessmen "in a whisper, for fear of frightening them," showing her compassion. She conveys her thoughts about the Queen: "And she can run very fast!" The dialogue, thoughts, and feelings enable readers to understand Alice.

Although readers meet talking flowers and insects, the White Queen who turns into a sheep, and the lion and the unicorn, none seem to be as memorable as Tweedledum and Tweedledee, Humpty Dumpty, and the Red Knight. Alice's experiences with these significant characters eventually lead to the fulfillment of her journey and her transition to Queen Alice.

Alice encounters Tweedledum and Tweedledee, two chubby men standing under a tree, each with an arm round the other's neck. They epitomize proper behavior and courtesy. They hug like brothers and grin like schoolchildren. When Tweedledum and Tweedledee dress for battle, they agree to "fight till six, and then have dinner." Carroll shares his rhyming skills through these characters by introducing the humorous verse "The Walrus and the Carpenter."

Readers will recognize Humpty Dumpty who "sat on a wall: Humpty Dumpty had a great fall, all the King's horses and all the King's men, couldn't put Humpty Dumpty in his place again." Alice too discovers the human egg with an enormous face. His supercilious character declares "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." He is clever with words, and defines the Jabberwocky poem for Alice. However, Humpty Dumpty uses a stern voice. Alice finds him distasteful, and exclaims "of all the unsatisfactory people I ever met—."

The awkward yet affable White Knight becomes another significant character. This benevolent being battles the Red Knight that struggles to take Alice prisoner. During the match, Carroll explains the Rules of Battle, referring to the rules of chess. These rules enable the White Knight to aid in Alice's transformation to Queen as she crosses the next brook to complete her journey game. The White Knight kindheartedly says, "I'll see you safe to the end of the wood—and then I must go back, you know.

That's the end of my move."

The White Knight leads Alice through the woods, showing his "own inventions" as they travel, and constantly falling off his horse. This character becomes so romantically memorable to Alice that of all the strange things she sees on her journey, she

remembers most clearly—"the mild blue eyes and kindly smile of the Knight—the setting sun gleaming through his hair, and on his Armour in a blaze of light that quite dazzles" her.

Carroll interjects his thoughts, frequently confiding to readers. For example, the author says, "I hope you understand what thinking in chorus means—for I must confess that I don't," and "Alice didn't venture to ask what he paid them with; so you see I can't tell you." Perhaps Carroll must leave it to readers' imaginations!

Setting

The novel opens with Alice's cat, Dinah, grooming her kittens. Alice gently scoops up a black kitten and scolds it for poor manners. As she half talks to herself and half sleeps, Alice imagines going into the Looking-glass House behind the mirror surrounding the fireplace. One thing leads to another, and Alice finds herself in the Looking-glass room.

Carroll immediately situates readers in the fantasy using the rules of chess. Alice finds herself in a chess game where anything can happen. Invisible to the Red King and Queen, Alice discovers that her enormous size enables her to move the Queen like a chess player would make a move. She brings the Queen, and then the King, next to their crying child. The zany action unfolds.

Familiar paraphernalia makes the story believable: the Red and White Kings and Queens, the pawns, and the garden-like chessboard. The unfamiliar events add the flair that characterizes Carroll's style. He introduces the legendary Jabberwocky as Alice discovers a poem in a Looking-glass book. Alice floats down a stairway by keeping the tips of her fingers on the handrail, continues through the hallway, and almost out the door. The garden of flowers—Tiger Lilies, Roses, and Daisies—talks to her. Carroll engages fantasy and reality to create a believable Looking-glass world. He does it with such craft and description that none of it seems incongruous.

Carroll uses his interests in math and logic to develop his story. For example, the Red Queen asks Alice "Can you do Addition? What's one and one and one and one ... " and "Can you do Subtraction? Take nine from eight" to which Alice replies, "Nine from eight I can't, you know ... "

This imitates the academic setting and career that epitomized Carroll's life.

The author uses his expertise in nonsense verse, rhymes, humor, and puns to create songs, jokes, and stories throughout the novel. For example, clever humor develops the talking flowers: "There's the tree in the middle," said the Rose. "What else is it good for?"

"But what could it do, if any danger came?"

Alice asked.

"It could bark," said the Rose.

"It says 'Bough-wough!'" cried a Daisy.

"That's why its branches are called boughs."

Through the Looking-Glass captures the imagination of childhood much like its predecessor Alicein Wonderland. Carroll creates the playful atmosphere that makes it possible to experience the story through a child's eyes.

Social Sensitivity

Through the Looking-Glass does not lend itself to an in-depth analysis of social sensitivities. Carroll inadvertently develops social sensitivities as part of character definition. Issues of hierarchy, change, and loneliness emerge from his expert personification of each character.

Carroll, influenced by his family's social position, tradition in the church, and the attitudes of Victorian England, weaves the elements of hierarchy and order into his novel. More reverent than the King and Queen of Alice in Wonderland, the Red and White Kings and Queens befriend Alice and help her transition to Queen. The story exaggerates, in a clever way, the executive's power to bring order to the land.

Carroll explores the conflicts and tensions inherent in a child's world. Humpty Dumpty's severe tone, as well as the Queens'judging attitudes, challenges Alice and her beliefs. This conflict requires Alice to champion and to believe in herself. The White Knight aids Alice in feeling protected and confident. Tweedledum and Tweedledee's kindness and compassion fortify her character. As Alice deals with loneliness, awkwardness, and the conflicts, her character matures. This will help readers see that they can grow through bad experiences—their own as well as those of fictional characters.

Carroll's concerns about language, dominance, violence, and power are just as appropriate in the nuclear age as the Victorian era. Although some readers may recoil from Carroll's assertation that the desire to grow up includes the desire to dominate and punish, this assertion does force readers to question their own definitions of adulthood, as well as their own definitions of the loss incurred when leaving childhood behind. Alice in Wonderland, with its chaotic landscape and characters, may be more frightening, but Through the Looking-Glass is perhaps more psychologically challenging.

Through the Looking-Glass is doubly challenging because the adult figures— the Gnat, the White Knight, and the White Queen—are often impotent, unreliable, or incompetent. Ethical and social decisions are as troubling for them as for Alice. In fact, Alice often behaves more rationally and with greater determination.

For this very reason—its portrayal of the difficulties of adulthood—Through the Looking-Glass appeals to adults.

Many have experienced the self-doubts of the White Knight, the regression of the White Queen, the longing to be silly like the Gnat, the desire to fight like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, or to turn a feast into a spoiled party. The book works on two different psychological levels; it dramatizes the child's concerns about growing up and the adult's anxiety about the rigors and complexities of life.

Literary Qualities

Through the Looking-Glass combines verse with prose. Two poems, in particular, have importance outside the context of the book. "Jabberwocky," that oft-quoted and memorized nonsense poem, is a mock-heroic ballad about a battle between a young man and a Jabberwock beast. The ballad form, the story line, and the use of some regular constructions provide a conventional framework for the poem. The invented and nonsensical words, however, provide the delight in the poem. Readers try to guess the meaning of the words by feel and association; with no conclusive meaning to the words, their meaning becomes whatever readers make it.

Almost as famous is the poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" with its lines: " The time has come,' the Walrus said,/ To talk of many things:/ Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—/ Of cabbages—and kings—' " As the White Knight's poem is a parody of Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence," so "The Walrus and the Carpenter" satirizes the style of Thomas Hood's Dream, of Eugene Aram. The absurdity in this poem comes not from language but from imagery—the sun shining in the middle of the night, the oysters wearing shoes although they have no feet. Shoes, ships, wax, cabbages, and kings will not fuse into a conversation topic; nevertheless, the lines convey the meaning that the time has come to talk of wide-ranging essentials. Nonsense becomes sense.

The prose of Through the Looking Glass similarly uses language inventively, from the puns of the Gnat to the pomposities of Humpty Dumpty. Although Carroll's fantasy is original in its inventive use of language and characters, his story is rooted in the established tradition of the maturation story (Bildungsroman). Alice follows such diverse characters as Henry Fielding's Tom Jones in Tom Jones and Charles Dickens's Pip in Great Expectations. And Carroll also brings to life such familiar nursery rhyme characters as Humpty Dumpty, turning him into a pompous social climber.

Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There seems like a perfect description of this ingenious house where Alice moves along a magical and make-believe chess board to become Queen. Through the Looking-Glass echoes Carroll's prolific writing life by showing the literary qualities he employs.

The author uses anthropomorphism effectively to develop his peculiar creatures.

For example, Carroll personifies objects to give them human feelings, thoughts, or attitudes—the Goat on the train proclaims Alice "ought to know her way to the ticket office," and the Beetle joins in saying "she'll have to go back from here as luggage!" The talking flowers, the Gnat sitting on Alice's shoulder, and the Chessmen racing to save Humpty Dumpty, add to the enchantment of Looking-glass House.

The author interrupts the chronological sequence of events so that Alice can share information. For example, Carroll uses parentheses to say "Alice said afterwards, when

she was telling her sister the history of all this ... " and "as Alice afterwards described it." This technique aids in developing the story.

The dialect supports the fairy-tale as Carroll grounds the characters' attitudes and events in nineteenth-century Oxford. His attentiveness to tradition shows in the moves of the Kings and Queens. Alice's train ride no doubt arose from Carroll's train excursions. Moreover, the magical garden, the setting for the talking flowers, may have represented the garden where Carroll and Alice Raikes met.

Carroll's inclination for the nonsensical not only creates the characters' dialect, but also enhances the plot. For example, the Jabberwocky poem becomes pivotal by appearing repeatedly throughout the novel.

As Alice holds the poem up to a glass, she reads: Twas brillig, and the slithy toves Did gyre and gimble in the wabe: All mimsy were the borogoves, And the mom raths outgrabe.

Alice "couldn't make it out at all," yet later asks Humpty Dumpty to make sense of it.

The story's resolution unfolds quickly.

Upon successful completion of her journey, Alice celebrates with the Red and White Queen as she becomes Queen Alice. As they discuss this in a nonsensical way, Alice rises to return thanks, and pandemonium breaks out. Alice, not able to stand the confusion, tugs the tablecloth with her hands, sending plates, dishes, guests, and candles crashing in a heap on the floor.

Alice grabs the Red Queen and begins shaking it "into a kitten," when she awakens to find a kitten in her hands. She reprimands the kitten, Red Majesty, for waking her out of a pleasant dream in the Lookingglass World.

Alice names each kitten, and Dinah, and guesses at the parts they played in her dream. Did Dinah become Humpty Dumpty?

Did Snowdrop become the White Queen?

The author poses the question of who dreamt the dream—was it Alice, or was it the Red King. Alice asks the kittens, and the author asks the readers, "Which do you think that it was?"

Carroll's books influenced the development of children's literature, and have become some of the most popular children's books. Carroll's unique style using nonsense, humor, and wit earns this place in history.

Themes

One important theme of Through the Looking-Glass is the power of language to impose order on chaotic reality. The power of words can be seen in the nursery-rhyme characters whose actions are determined by their rhymes. Tweedledum and Tweedledee fight over the rattle not because they choose to but because the rhyme says they must. Humpty Dumpty is sure the king will send his men to help him because the rhyme says so.

How effectively characters use language also determines who they are.

Humpty Dumpty tells Alice that when he uses a word, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less. . . . The question is which is to be master—that's all." Elevated on his wall Humpty is a snob. Because of his proper diction, he feels he is upper class and can "lord" it over others. His words, he feels, give him the power to bully. But, like Humpty's eggshell exterior, this power is fragile. Fragile, too, are human efforts through language to impose order on nature. Alice may choose to tell Kitty that her adventures were a "nice dream," but she has just finished crying out at the dreadful confusion of the banquet that "I can't stand this any longer!" Through language, humanity tries to impose meaning and order on an amoral, chaotic world, but this order of human law and social convention is shaky at best.

Carroll also points out, through several episodes in Through the LookingGlass, that language in our world is often arbitrary and sometimes reveals sloppy thinking. In the garden a tree in danger barks, "Bough-wough." Carroll here shows how strangely our language connects tree bark and dog's barks, tree boughs, and a dog's bow-wows. In another incident a frog cannot understand why anyone should answer the door unless it has been asking something. He mistrusts words that are illdefined and irregularly connected to reality. In still another episode Alice tells the King she sees nobody on the road, and he congratulates her on her good eyesight in seeing Nobody.

While language can create a fragile order for the world, it can also reduce it from a world of poetry and imagination to one of reason and control. When the Gnat, for example, asks Alice what insects she "rejoices" in, Alice replies, "I don't rejoice in insects at all ... . But I can tell you the names of some of them."

The Gnat asks Alice whether the insects answer to their names, that is, whether the names benefit the insects at all. Alice replies that the use of names comes only to the person who does the naming, who exercises control over other creatures.

When Alice starts listing to some of the insects, the Gnat offers fanciful definitions for the arbitrary names: "a snapdragon-fly. Its body is made of plum pudding, its wings of holly-leaves, and its head is a raisin burning in brandy."

The poetry of the Gnat's definitions escape Alice; she can only theorize why insects "are so fond of flying into candles."

The Gnat episode also points up another important power of language, the power of names. Alice has missed the Gnat's point that names reduce, that names signify another's control. The Gnat asks her if she would willingly lose her name. She replies, "No, indeed."

When the Gnat observes that her governess could then only call her "Miss" and could "miss" her lessons, Alice rejects his idea as a bad joke. The Gnat then weeps for her lost imagination and innocence.

Later on in her journey to adulthood, Alice does lose her name in the mysterious woods where names are forgotten. Without her name Alice walks lovingly with a fawn. When their names return, however, the fawn flees in fright from the self-assertive girl who announces, "I know my name now. I won't forget it again."

Alice's dissociation from nature and innocence mark one of her important steps to adulthood, a primary theme of both Alice books. This journey to adulthood has more perils than the loss of innocence. Tweedledee implies that adulthood may not provide all the control and stability Alice desires when he insists that she may only be part of the Red King's dream. Humpty Dumpty warns her of the discomforts of growing older and advises her to resist doing so.

Alice, however, is determined to grow up, to become a queen, even at the cost of losing innocence, imagination, and the one character in Looking-Glass land who genuinely seems to care for her.

Many scholars have thought that Carroll injected his own personality into the character of the White Knight. The knight is one of the few characters who treats Alice with respect and courtesy, as a kind adult acknowledging a child's world. The knight's world is one of gentleness and caring rather than determination and power. In his poem, which parodies William Wordsworth's poem "Resolution and Independence," he tells of an old man sitting on a gate. A young man approaches and repeatedly asks the old man what he does. Although the old man gives him several imaginative responses, the young man is so busy with himself, his inventions, and his plans for success that he does not listen and even beats the old man. Alice is similarly so absorbed in herself and in becoming a queen that she jokes about the White Knight's departure and skips away thoughtlessly. The adult world with its contests for power and success is often a world of insensitivity and cruelty.

Alice's lack of kindness appears again in the scene with the Red and White Queens. The Red Queen notices that the White Queen is sleepy and tells Alice to sing her a lullaby. As Alice could not join in the Gnat's humor, she now cannot sing because "I don't known any lullabies." When the two queens sleep on her shoulders, she complains that no one ever has had to take care of two queens at once: "Do wake up you heavy things."

Adulthood and power are not all Alice wants them to be. At the banquet, when she starts giving orders, she finds that the pudding can talk, that everyone fixes his attention on

her, that she must make a speech, and that chaos quickly ensues. Rather than controlling the chaos, she fuels it, especially when she pulls the tablecloth off. This loss of power and control makes Alice violent—she fiercely grabs hold of the Red Queen and shakes her "backwards and forwards with all her might." Her violence carries over into the real world, where she cruelly shakes her kitten and then quickly tries to cover by fussing over it. Growing up is confusing for Alice, but being a grown-up— using language precisely, balancing self-achievement with concern for others, using power and control wisely— is equally hard or even harder.

Adaptations

Numerous artists have recorded Through the Looking-Glass for such producers as Caedmon, Miller-Brody, and George Rose.

Topics for Discussion

1. Describe the White Knight. What makes this character important? Why?

2. Characterize Humpty Dumpty. What role does he play in developing Alice's character?

3. Describe Alice. How old is she? Does her outlook change during the story? If so, how?

4. Cite two events in the novel. Why did the author include them? What purpose do they serve in the fairy-tale?

5. John Tenniel illustrated Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There. How do the illustrations support the story and characters? Would the story be as effective without illustrations?

6. Tweedledum and Tweedledee befriend Alice and help her on her journey. Describe how they develop her character.

7. When Alice becomes a Queen, how do the Red and White Queen treat her? Why? What purpose do the White and Red Queen serve in Alice's character development?

8. The author uses many uncommon or little-known words to enhance his story. He also uses rhyming and verse. How do you think Carroll's writing style earned him such a prominent place in the history of children's literature? Name specific examples that typify Carroll's style.

9. What is the significance of the title Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There? Characterize Looking-Glass House. What makes it believable? Absurd?

10. Locate examples of anthropomorphism and personification. Discuss the author's use of these literary qualities.

Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Research transportation in nineteenth-century England during the time Carroll wrote and published this story. What modes of transportation did Carroll use in his novel that mimic the era?

2. At the novel's resolution, Carroll asks "Which do you think that it was?", Alice or the Red King that dreamt the story. What do you think and why?

3. Imagine that Carroll wrote the book from the viewpoint of the Red King instead of Alice. How would the story change? Your opinion?

4. Research Carroll's life. What significance did his father play in his life? His mother? What qualities did they help him develop that enabled him to become a prominent writer?

5. Write a story using Carroll's nonsense style. Personify as many types of objects and animals as you can. Share it with the class.

6. Read The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity by Julia Cameron.

Learn about Lewis Carroll's writing routine. What techniques does Cameron advocate, that Carroll used? Do you think they help writers? Why or why not?

7. The author employs descriptions that help readers visualize the characters.

Describe a real or imaginary event using the senses to entertain your readers.

Share it with the class.

8. Carroll employs his interest in chess as the underlying theme in Through the Looking-Glass. Learn the game of chess.

Cite how the author applies the rules of chess to Alice's journey.

9. Cite the literary qualities that Carroll uses most frequently. Write a story using techniques that interest you.

10. John Tenniel illustrated throughout his career, the most notable work being Carroll's novels. Research Tenniel's life.

What traits enabled him to work with Carroll on a second book even though he found Carroll's attention to detail difficult?

11. Carroll applies uncommon words to make his fairy tales unique and memorable. He takes ordinary creatures and makes them curious. Look up five new words, including creatures, and write a short fairy tale.

12. Create nouns and verbs for a poem, like Carroll did for Jabberwocky. Have your classmates paint or draw pictures of the images that they think represent your invented words.

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Fascinating account of Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson's life and career.

Related Titles

Through the Looking-Glass is a sequel to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and differs from it in tone and substance.

The main theme—what it is like to change from child to adult—remains the same. There are, however, obvious contrasts. Alice's adventure is indoors rather than out, and it is winter rather than summer. Alice's sister, with her mothering spirit, is no longer present (Alice does tell her of her adventures later). Instead, Alice mothers Dinah's kittens, who become the White and Red Queens of her dreams. In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, the Queen of Hearts terrified Alice; now Alice herself seeks to become a queen, to dominate and punish (as she does the kittens).

Alice is now more self-confident and aggressive. She does not fall into the Looking-Glass world but wilfully seeks it. She identifies with the tyrannical Tiger-lily and is impressed by the power of the Red Queen. As the book goes on, the characters seem less threatening to Alice. She gains self-assurance but loses her innocence.

The atmosphere has also changed. The landscape of Through the Looking-Glass is a chessboard, and the characters move according to the rules of a precise game. In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Alice lived with total freedom in a disordered world; now she sees a more determined world where the Lion and Unicom, Red and White Knights, and Tweedledum and Tweedledee must fight at regular intervals. Although Through the Looking-Glass differs from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, it still offers its whimsical delights and psychological insights.

Related Web Sites

'Lewis Carroll." Lewis Carroll Home Page http://www.lewiscarroll.org/carroll.html. April 30, 2001. Web site with text, academic information, societies, news, and fun facts about Carroll.

'Lewis Carroll: An Overview." http://landow.stg.brown.edu/victorian/carroll/carrollov.html. April 30, 2001. EsThrough the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There 459 says on the social and political content of the Alice books and Carroll's biography.

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