

Subject: Children's English Literature

Unit 3. Realms of Fantasy

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

by Lewis Carroll (1865)

Illustrations & Questions for Study and Discussion

Chapters 1 & 2

Work of reference:

Carroll, L. (1866). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland with 42 Illustrations by John Tenniel*. Macmillan and Co.

Knowledge activation:
Could you identify any of the following characters and/or elements?



Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865), Lewis Carroll

Some introductory notes

- Are you ready to venture into Wonderland?
Would you like to explore **a world of fantasy** where many of the **rules** that govern ordinary, daily life are broken?
- Lewis Carroll invented a reality with rules of its own which are often **non-rational** and **illogical**.
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a fantasy story where events do not usually obey **the rules of nature**.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865), Lewis Carroll

Some introductory notes

- You will leave familiar reality, escape from the mundane and ordinary, and **experience the fantastic** while you accompany Alice through **an alternative world**.
- The journey will take you to **an imaginary realm** where **threats and puzzles** must be faced before being able to escape and return to the familiar world.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865), Lewis Carroll

Some introductory notes

- Wonderland is a fascinating and amusing reality. But it becomes too **puzzling, confusing, frustrating and even dangerous** as the story progresses.
- Wonderland characters' behaviours are **unusual, strange, and sometimes aggressive**. So normal communication with them is very difficult.
- As **nonsense and hazards** increase, our desire to escape from Wonderland and return to our world grows.

Chapter 1. Down the Rabbit Hole.

Read the following slides:

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 **conversations** ?”

(Alice 1-2)

... when the Rabbit actually *took a **watch** out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and, burning with **curiosity**, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large **rabbit-hole** under the hedge. (*Alice 2-3*)



In the opening scene of the novel, Alice sees a white rabbit. In the illustration he is wearing **clothes** and standing on his hind legs. Here he has just pulled a **watch** out of his waistcoat pocket.

Alice has heard him say that he is late.

“Burning with **curiosity**,” she decides to follow him.

Alice sees him jump down a hole.

The rabbit hole is the entrance to wonderland.



The White Rabbit in the opening scene

- What do you think about Alice's first decision?
 - Would you follow the White Rabbit? Why?
 - Will the White Rabbit play an important role in the story?
- In this fantasy story, the alternative world is entered through a portal (the rabbit hole) in the primary world.

Pay attention to this image & answer the questions:



Where is Alice?

Is there anybody else there?

What is she going to do?

Where does the door lead to?

Where has she found the key?

What is peculiar about the door?

What does the narrator say?

What does Alice think/say?



After falling down a very deep well (the rabbit hole) for a few minutes, she finds herself in a long passage or corridor with **locked doors** on either side. She sees the White Rabbit disappear after turning a corner. Then she discovers **a little door behind a curtain**.

She is holding **a key** that she has seen on a nearby table. She will be able to open the door and see that it leads to **a beautiful garden**. She would like to wander around the garden. But **her size** is a problem; she is too big to fit through the door.

The locked door is an interesting motif in children's literature.

What is Alice going to do?

Why?

Is she afraid of the effect the drink may have on her?

If you were Alice, what would *you* do?

What would you say to Alice if you were there?

Where is the key?

What does she need the key for?

What will happen to Alice after drinking the contents of the bottle?



Alice has found a little bottle on the glass table near the little door leading to the beautiful garden. She has left the key on the table and is holding the bottle in her right hand. Around the neck of the bottle there is a label paper with the words DRINK ME printed on it. Since the bottle is not marked poison, she decides to taste its contents.



As a result of this action, she will shrink to the right size for going through the little door. But Alice will not be able to open the door because she left the key on the table before drinking the contents of the bottle.

How does Alice react to this **frustrating situation**?

Alice and the small bottle

- **The small bottle** is one of the interesting objects that Alice finds in Wonderland. Make a list and try to explain the significance or function of each of them in the story.
- Another interesting object is **the telescope**, even though we never see one in the story. Can you explain that?



"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English); **"now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!"** (for when she looked down at her feet, they seemed to be almost out of sight, they were getting so far off). "Oh, my poor little feet, I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears? I'm sure *I* shan't be able! I shall be a great deal too far off to trouble myself about you: you must manage the best way you can;— but I must be kind to them," thought Alice, "or perhaps they won't walk the way I want to go! Let me see: I'll give them a new pair of boots every Christmas." (*Alice* 15-16)



Why does Alice have this bizarre shape?

How does she feel about this physical change? How does she react to it?

How would you respond to this problem?

What would you say to console/comfort her?



Alice has seen **a little glass box** that was lying under the table and found **a small cake** in it with the words EAT ME.

Thinking that it will help her get into the garden, she has decided to **eat** the cake.

Look at the illustration and explain what happens to Alice after finishing off the cake.

How would you feel about such a **dramatic physical change**?

Alice has been crying and is now sitting on a puddle of tears.

She is looking at the White Rabbit, who is hurrying away from her.

She attempts to speak to him, but he does not pay attention to her.

The White Rabbit has a fan and a pair of gloves.

Will these objects be important to Alice?
What do you think?



What objects has the rabbit left behind?

Why is the rabbit in a hurry? Where is the rabbit going?

What would you do if you saw a rabbit in a hurry?

...as the hall was very hot, she kept **fanning** herself all the time she went on **talking...**
(*Alice* 19)

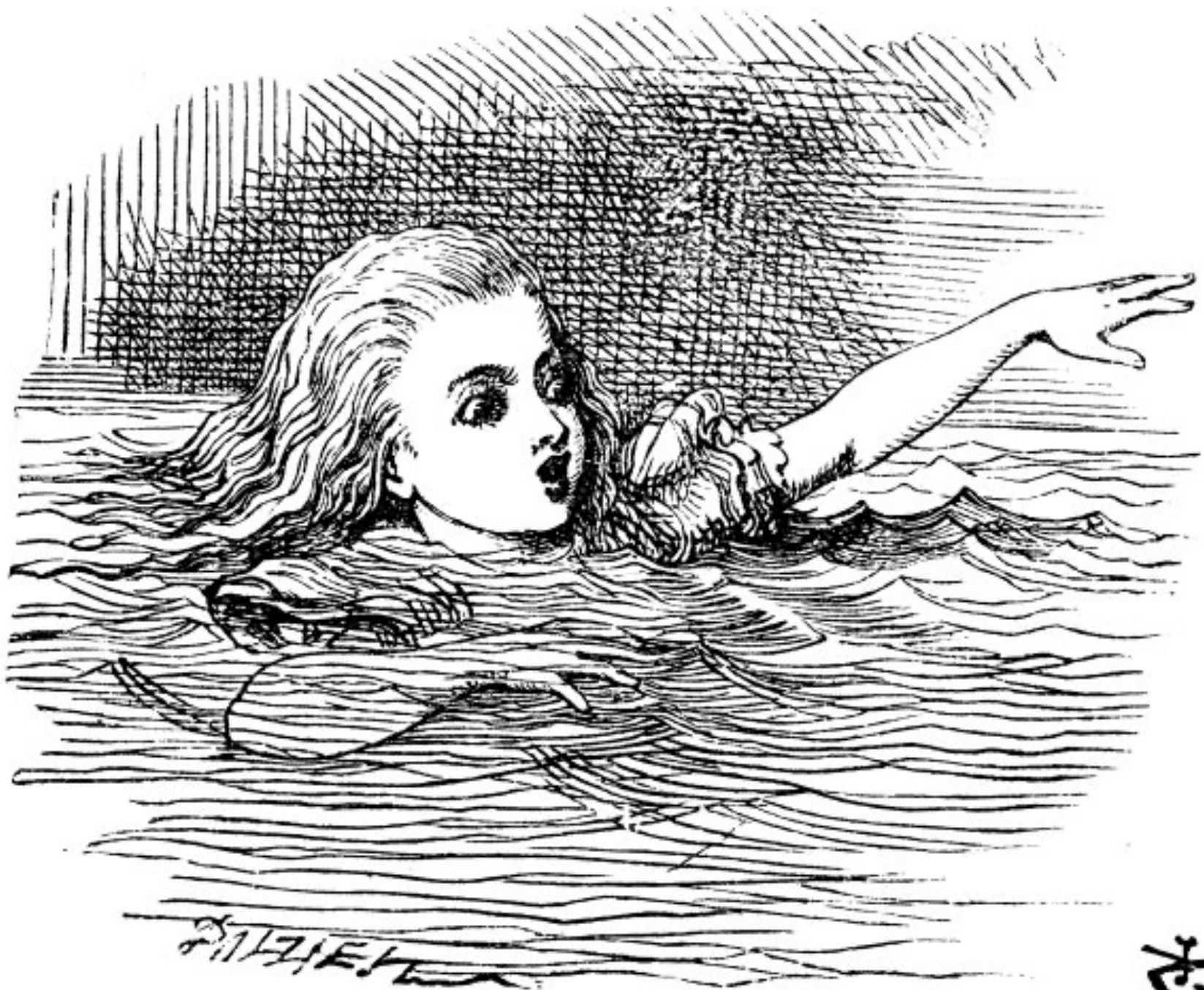
What is Alice's **soliloquy** about?



Alice's soliloquy

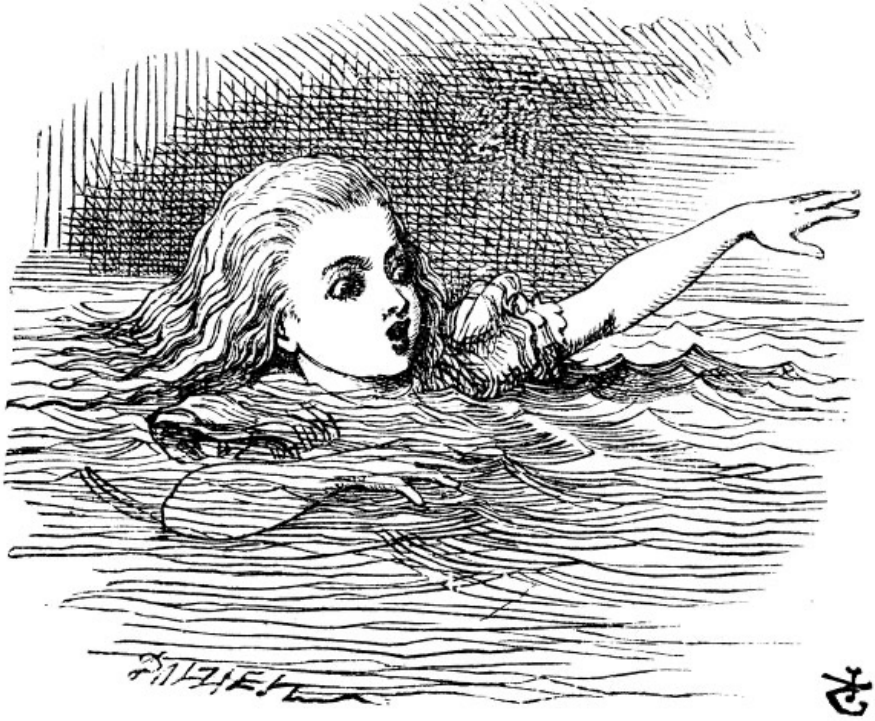
“Dear, dear! How **queer** everything is to-day ! And yesterday things went on just as **usual**. I wonder if I've been **changed** in the night ? Let me think: was I **the same** when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little **different**. But if I'm not the same, the next question is. **Who in the world am I?** Ah, *that's* the great **puzzle!**” And she began thinking over all the children she knew, that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have been changed for any of them. (*Alice* 19)

Alice is worried that she may have **forgotten** all the things she used to know. She tries to recite her **lessons** accurately, but she **fails**...



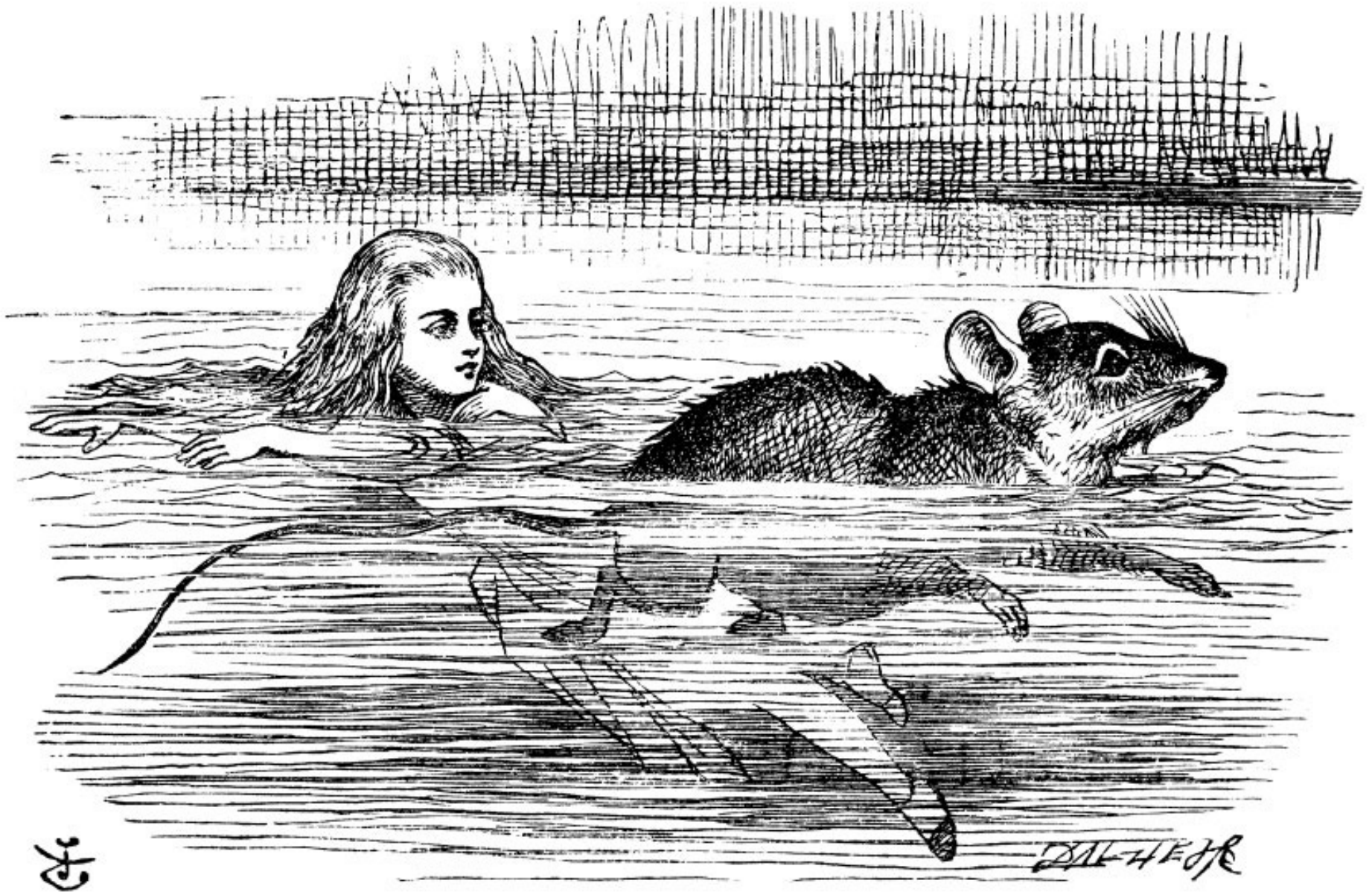
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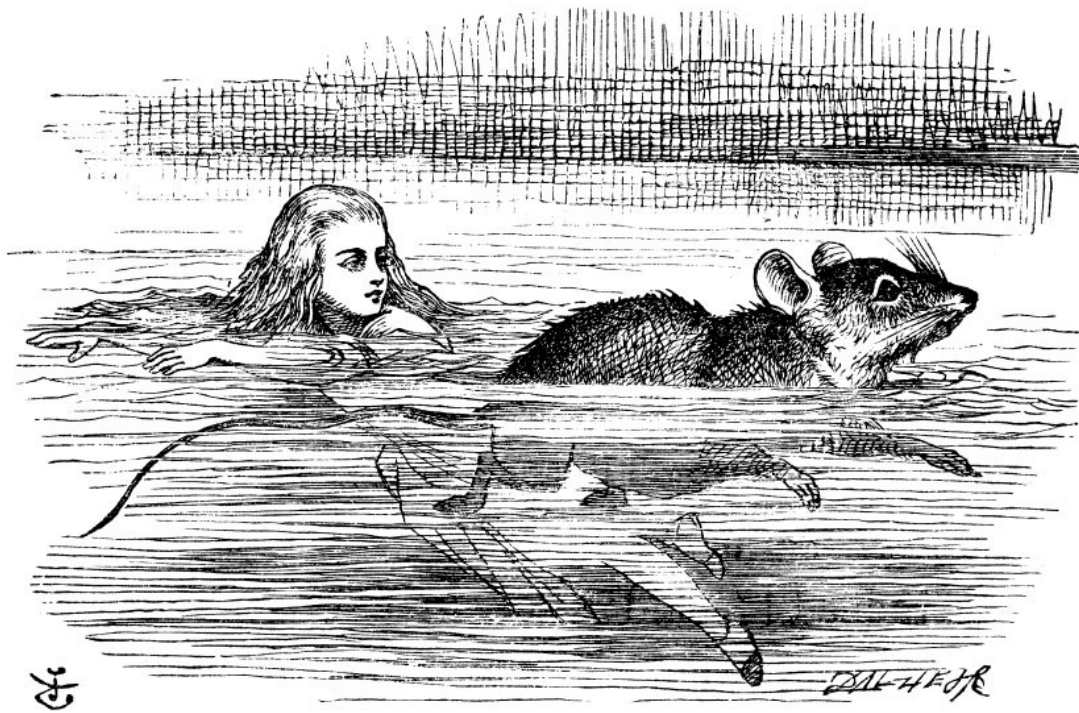


What would you do if you were in this terrible predicament?

Chapter 2. The Pool of Tears
Alice **cried** a lot because she was not able to fulfill her desire of getting into the lovely garden; she was **too large** to get into the garden. Then she **shrank** to a more convenient size (to fit through the door) after using the White Rabbit's **fan**. But now, **the pool of tears is a sea** in which she will drown unless she swims.



Alice meets the Mouse in the sea of tears. Is this image realistic?



Alice meets a **Mouse** while she is swimming in the sea of tears.

Alice attempts to have a **conversation** with the Mouse, but ...

See *Alice* 24-28.

What mistakes does Alice make as she attempts to hold a conversation with the Mouse?

The language and the subject of the conversation

This episode provides a good opportunity to think about the rules or conventions that we should respect to start and conduct a conversation.

It was high time to go, for **the pool** was getting quite crowded with the **birds and animals** that had fallen into it: there were a Duck and a Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet, and several other **curious creatures**. Alice led the way, and the whole party swam to **the shore**. (*Alice* 28)

Illustration by A. Rackman

