

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

‘You can be the White Queen’s pawn,’ the Red Queen tells Alice. ‘A pawn goes two squares in its first move. So you’ll go *very* quickly through the Third Square – by railway, probably. Then in the Fourth Square you’ll meet Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The Fifth Square is mostly water, and the Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty. The Seventh Square is all forest – one of the Knights will show you the way.’

And in the Eighth Square Alice will become a Queen. But what a strange game of chess it is! In the looking-glass world all the chess pieces argue with you, and you have to run very fast just to stay in the same place. Here, time runs backwards and the White Queen can remember what happened the week after next.

And whose dream is it, anyway? Is it Alice’s dream, or is she just a part of the Red King’s dream? And if so, what will happen if he wakes up?



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Through the Looking-Glass

And What Alice Found There

Retold by
Jennifer Bassett

With original illustrations by
John Tenniel



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THE GAME OF CHESS

Chess is a game for two people, played on a chess-board marked with sixty-four black and white squares. The thirty-two chess pieces – also called chessmen – are black (or red) and white, and are called kings, queens, bishops, knights, castles (or rooks), and pawns. The pawn is the smallest and least important piece.

If a pawn reaches the eighth square on the opposite side of the board, it can be exchanged for a queen. This is what happens to Alice in the story.

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

CHESSMEN

The White Queen	The Red Queen
The White King	The Red King
The White Knight	The Red Knight

OTHER CHARACTERS

Talking flowers, *Tiger-lily*, *Rose*, *Daisy*
Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Humpty Dumpty
The Lion and the Unicorn
Haigha and Hatta, *the White King's messengers*

Looking-glass house



One thing was certain, it was the *black* kitten that began it all. The white kitten had been unable to do anything for the last quarter of an hour, because the old cat was washing its face, very slowly and very carefully.

But the black kitten was free to do what it wanted. And so, while Alice was sitting in a corner of the great armchair, half talking to herself and half asleep, the kitten was playing a grand game with a ball of wool. Soon the wool was lying in a terrible tangle all over the carpet, with the kitten running after its own tail in the middle.

‘Oh, you bad little thing!’ cried Alice, when she saw the wool. She picked up the kitten and climbed back into the armchair. ‘You really mustn’t play with the wool, you know. It will take me so long to roll the ball up again. Why don’t you

play chess instead, Kitty? When I was playing a while ago, you were watching me so carefully. In fact, you look just like the Red Queen yourself.'

And Alice picked up the Red Queen from the chessmen on the table, and held it up to show the kitten. But the kitten tried to escape, and, to punish it, Alice lifted it up to the looking-glass above the fireplace. 'If you're not good, Kitty,' she said, 'I'll put you through into looking-glass house. How would you like *that*?

'I do wonder,' Alice went on, 'if everything in that room is the same as in our room. The things that I can see *look* the same – except the books, because the words go the wrong way. But perhaps the rest of the house is really different and full of interesting things. Oh, I wish we could get through, Kitty! Let's pretend we can. Let's pretend the glass has gone soft and . . . Why, I do believe it has! It's turning into a kind of cloud . . .'

Alice did not know how it happened, but while she was speaking, she found herself climbing up to the looking-glass. And the glass was beginning to disappear, just like a bright silvery cloud.

In another moment Alice was through the glass and had jumped down into the looking-glass room. At once she began looking around and noticed that several things were very different from the old room. The pictures on the wall all seemed to be alive, and the clock above the fireplace had the face of a little old man, who smiled at her.

'This room isn't as tidy as the other one,' Alice thought to

herself, as she noticed several chessmen on the floor by the fireplace. But the next moment, with a little ‘Oh!’ of surprise, she was down on the floor herself, watching them.

The chessmen were walking around, arm in arm!

‘Here are the Red King and the Red Queen,’ Alice said, in a whisper, in order not to frighten them. ‘And there are two Castles walking together. And two of the Pawns, and a white Bishop reading a newspaper . . . I don’t think they can hear me or see me,’ she went on. ‘I wonder—’

Then something on the table behind her made a noise. Alice turned to look and saw that one of the White Pawns had fallen over and begun to cry. She watched it with interest.

‘It is the voice of my child!’ cried the White Queen by the fireplace. ‘My dear Lily! My sweet child!’ and she began to



‘Here are the Red King and the Red Queen,’ Alice said.

climb wildly up the table leg.

Poor little Lily was now screaming loudly. Alice wanted to be helpful, so she picked up the Queen and put her on the table next to her noisy little daughter.

The Queen sat very still, with her mouth open, for almost a minute. Then she called down to the White King, who was still on the floor by the fireplace. ‘Be careful of the storm!’

‘What storm?’ said the King, looking round worriedly.

‘There’s a terrible wind – it blew me up here in a second. You come up the usual way, and be careful!’

Alice watched as the White King slowly began to climb the table leg. Then she said, ‘It will take you hours to get up. Why don’t I help you?’ Gently, she picked him up and moved him slowly upwards. The King was very surprised indeed. His eyes and his mouth got larger and larger, and rounder and



The King was very surprised indeed.

rounder. Alice nearly dropped him because she was laughing so much.

When she put him down on the table, he immediately fell flat on his back and lay still. But after a while he sat up, and spoke to the Queen in a frightened whisper.

‘I tell you, my dear, I turned cold to the very ends of my hair! I shall never, *never* forget that moment.’

‘You will,’ the Queen said, ‘if you don’t write it down.’

Alice watched with interest as the King took out a very large notebook and began writing. Then she saw a book lying on the table near her, and began to turn the pages.

‘It’s all in some language that I don’t know,’ she said to herself. It was like this.

JABBERWOCKY
’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Puzzled, she looked at it for some time, then suddenly understood. ‘Of course, it’s a looking-glass book! If I hold it up to the glass, the words will go the right way again.’

This was the poem that Alice read.

JABBERWOCKY
’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

‘It seems very pretty,’ Alice said, ‘but a little hard to

understand.’ (Actually, she didn’t understand a word of it, but didn’t like to say so.) ‘It seems to fill my head with ideas – but I don’t know what they are!’

Then she suddenly jumped up, as another idea came to her. ‘If I don’t hurry, I shall have to go back through the looking-glass before I’ve seen the rest of the house, and the garden. I’ll look at the garden first, I think.’

In a moment she was out of the room and running down the stairs. But it wasn’t really running, because she was moving gently through the air and her feet weren’t touching the stairs at all. At the bottom she managed to catch hold of the door-post, and after that she was pleased to find herself walking again in a natural way.

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The garden of live flowers

There was a small hill not far away and Alice decided to walk to it. ‘I shall be able to see the garden better from the top of the hill,’ she said.

She tried very hard to reach the hill, but it seemed impossible to get to it. She went first this way, then that way, but every time she turned a corner, she found herself back at the house.

‘I’m *not* going in again yet,’ she told the house crossly. ‘I’ll have to go back through the looking-glass into the old room and that’s the end of all my adventures then!’

She tried once more, and this time passed a large flower-

bed, with a tree growing in the middle.

‘Oh Tiger-lily,’ Alice said to one of the flowers, ‘I wish you could talk!’

‘We *can* talk,’ said the Tiger-lily, ‘if there is anybody interesting enough to talk to.’

For a minute Alice was too surprised to speak.

Then she said,



‘We can talk,’ said the Tiger-lily,
‘if there is anybody interesting enough to talk to.’

almost in a whisper, 'And can *all* the flowers talk?'

'As well as *you* can,' said the Tiger-lily. 'And a lot louder.'

'It isn't polite for us to begin, you know,' said the Rose, 'and I was really wondering when you would speak.'

'But why can you all talk?' Alice said, puzzled. 'I've been in many gardens before, and none of the flowers could talk.'

'Put your hand down and feel the ground,' said the Tiger-lily. 'Then you'll know why.'

Alice did so. 'It's very hard,' she said, 'but how does that explain it?'

'In most gardens,' the Tiger-lily said, 'they make the flower-beds too soft – so the flowers are always asleep.'

This sounded a very good reason to Alice. 'I never thought of that before!' she said.

'Do you ever think *at all*?' asked the Rose, unkindly.

'I never saw anybody with a more stupid face,' said a Daisy suddenly. It was the first time it had spoken, and Alice jumped in surprise.

'Oh, be quiet!' cried the Tiger-lily. 'What do you Daisies know about the world?'

'Are there any other people in the garden?' Alice asked.

'There's one other flower that can move around like you,' said the Rose. 'She's the same strange shape as you, but she's redder, with more leaves than you have.'

'She's coming now!' cried another Daisy. 'I can hear her feet – bang, bang, bang, on the ground.'

Alice looked round quickly, and saw that it was the Red Queen. 'She's grown a lot,' Alice thought. When she had seen

her by the fireplace, the Queen had been only eight centimetres high. Now she was taller than Alice herself!

‘I think I’ll go and meet her,’ Alice said.

‘You can’t possibly do that,’ said the Rose. ‘You must walk the other way if you want to meet her.’

This sounded nonsense to Alice, so she began to walk towards the Red Queen. To her surprise, she found herself a minute later walking in through the front door of the house. She turned round crossly, and saw the Queen again, on the other side of the garden. This time she tried walking the other way, *away* from the Queen.

It succeeded beautifully. A minute later she was standing opposite the Red Queen, and very near the hill that she had wanted to get to.

‘Where do you come from?’ said the Red Queen. ‘Where are you going? And why are you here at all? Look up, speak nicely, keep your hands still. And curtsy while you’re thinking what to say. It saves time.’

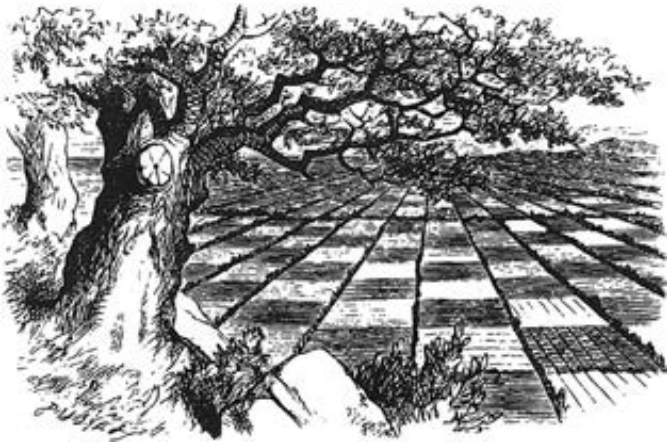
Alice tried to obey all these orders, feeling just a little frightened of the Queen.

‘I only wanted to look at the garden, your Majesty, from the top of that hill,’ she began.

‘Hill!’ cried the Queen. ‘Some people would call that a valley.’

‘But a hill *can’t* be a valley,’ said Alice. ‘That would be nonsense.’

The Red Queen shook her head. ‘You can call it nonsense if you like. Some people would say it was sensible!’



'It's just like a large chess-board!' Alice said.

Alice curtsied again, and decided it would be safer not to argue any more. Together, they walked on in silence up the hill. At the top Alice could see right across the country – and a very strange country it was. There were lots of little brooks running across from side to side, and there were long lines of hedges, going the other way. It was a country of squares.

'It's just like a large chess-board!' Alice said at last. 'Oh, and I can see some chessmen down there!' Her heart began to beat fast with excitement. 'It's a great game of chess, as big as the world itself – if this *is* the world at all. Oh, what fun! I wish I could be in it, even as a Pawn. Although I would love to be a Queen, of course.'

She looked a little worriedly at the real Queen as she said this. But the Red Queen smiled kindly, and said, 'You can be the White Queen's Pawn, if you like. Lily is too young to play. You're in the Second Square now, and when you get to the

Eighth Square, you'll be a Queen—'

Just at that moment, they began to run. Alice never did understand how it happened, but she had no time to think about it because they were running so fast.

'Faster! Faster!' cried the Queen, pulling Alice's hand. They ran like the wind, but the strange thing was that they never seemed to pass anything. The trees and other things round them never changed their places at all.

Alice was very puzzled by this, but still the Queen cried, 'Faster! Faster!' Now they were almost flying over the ground. Alice had never run so fast in her life.

When at last they stopped, she had to sit down because her legs were shaking. Then she looked around in surprise.

'But we've been under this same tree all the time! We're still in the same place!'

'Of course we are,' said the Queen. 'Why shouldn't we be?'



'Faster! Faster!' cried the Queen.

‘Well, in our country,’ said Alice, ‘if you run very fast for a long time, you usually arrive at a different place.’

‘What a slow kind of country!’ said the Queen. ‘Here, you see, you have to run very fast, just to keep in the same place. If you want to go somewhere different, you must run twice as fast. Now,’ she went on, ‘I shall tell you what to do. While I’m speaking, I shall take five steps, and at the fifth step, I shall go.’

She took two steps away from the tree and turned round. ‘A pawn goes two squares in its first move. So you’ll go *very* quickly through the Third Square – by railway, probably. Then you’ll be in the Fourth Square, which belongs to Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The Fifth Square is mostly water, and the Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty. But why haven’t you said anything?’

‘I didn’t know I had to say anything,’ said Alice.

‘It’s polite,’ said the Queen, ‘to say thank you for all this information. But never mind. Let’s pretend you said it. The Seventh Square is all forest – one of the Knights will show you the way – and in the Eighth Square we shall be Queens together, and it’s all parties and fun!’

Alice got up and curtsied, and sat down again.

The Queen took another two steps and turned round again. ‘Speak in French when you can’t think of the English word – and always remember who you are!’

She took another step, and was gone. Alice did not know if she had disappeared into the air, or run into the wood. But she had certainly gone, and Alice began to remember that she was a Pawn, and that it would soon be time to move.