

Remedial Class Material
Semester VI

Through the Looking-Glass

Lewis Carroll

Through the Looking-Glass, in full **Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There**, book by Lewis Carroll, dated 1872 but actually published in December 1871. Written as a sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking-Glass* describes Alice's further adventures as she moves through a mirror into another unreal world of illogical behaviour. Like its predecessor, it contains a vast number of quotable remarks and poems that have been used by many authors since Carroll's time.

Characters

Alice - The seven-and-a-half-year-old protagonist of the story. Alice's dream leads to her adventures in Looking-Glass World.

Humpty Dumpty - A contemptuous, egg-like man based on the nursery rhyme character. Humpty Dumpty sits on a wall and treats Alice rudely. He explains the meaning of "Jabberwocky" to Alice but changes the meanings of words.

Tweedledum And Tweedledee - A pair of identical little fat men dressed as schoolboys. Tweedledum and Tweedledee get along well and finish each other's thoughts, but wind up fighting each other over a broken rattle.

Red Queen - A domineering, officious woman who brings Alice into the chess game.

White Queen - An untidy, disorderly mess of a woman.

White Knight - A kind and noble companion

Unicorn - A mythical beast that resembles a horse with a long horn.

The Gnat - Alice's companion on the train and in the wood. The Gnat grows from normal insect size to become as large as a chicken.

Red King - The sleeping King.

The Red Knight - A knight who attempts to capture Alice. The Red Knight is captured by the White Knight.

The Tiger-Lily - A talking flower. The Tiger-lily speaks civilly to Alice and has some authority over the other flowers.

Haigha and Hatta - The White King's messengers.

The Goat - A passenger on the train with Alice.

The Man In White Paper - A passenger on the train with Alice.

White King, The Lion, The Sheep, The Rose

The Violet, The Daisies, Lily, Frog

Chapter wise Summary

Chapter One – Looking-Glass House: Alice is playing with a white kitten (whom she calls "Snowdrop") and a black kitten (whom she calls "Kitty") when she ponders what the world is like on the other side of a mirror's reflection. Climbing up onto the fireplace mantel, she pokes at the wall-hung mirror behind the fireplace and discovers, to her surprise, that she is able to step through it to an alternative world. In this reflected version of her own house, she finds a book with looking-glass poetry, "Jabberwocky", whose reversed printing she can read only by holding it up to the mirror. She also observes that the chess pieces have come to life, though they remain small enough for her to pick up.

Chapter Two – The Garden of Live Flowers: Upon leaving the house (where it had been a cold, snowy night), she enters a sunny spring garden where the flowers can speak; they perceive Alice as being a "flower that can move about". Elsewhere in the garden, Alice meets the Red Queen, who is now human-sized, and who impresses Alice with her ability to run at breathtaking speeds.

Chapter Three – Looking-Glass Insects: The Red Queen reveals to Alice that the entire countryside is laid out in squares, like a gigantic chessboard, and offers to make Alice a queen if she can move all the way to the eighth rank/row in a chess match. Alice is placed in the second rank as one of the White Queen's pawns, and begins her journey across the chessboard by boarding a train that jumps over the third row and directly into the fourth rank, thus acting on the rule that pawns can advance two spaces on their first move. She arrives in a forest where a depressed gnat teaches her about the looking glass insects, strange creatures part bug part object (e.g., bread and butterfly, rocking horse fly), before flying away sadly. Alice continues her journey and along the way, crosses the "wood where things have no names". There she forgets all nouns, including her own name. With the help of a fawn who has also forgotten his identity, she makes it to the other side, where they both remember everything. Realizing that he is a fawn, she is a human, and that fawns are afraid of humans, it runs off (to Alice's frustration).

Chapter Four – Tweedledum and Tweedledee: She then meets the fat twin brothers Tweedledum and Tweedledee, whom she knows from the nursery rhyme. After reciting the long poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter", they draw Alice's attention to the Red King—loudly snoring away under a nearby tree—and maliciously provoke her with idle philosophical banter that she exists only as an imaginary figure in the Red King's dreams. Finally, the brothers begin suiting up for battle, only to be frightened away by an enormous crow, as the nursery rhyme about them predicts.

Chapter Five – Wool and Water: Alice next meets the White Queen, who is very absent-minded but boasts of (and demonstrates) her ability to remember future events before they have happened. Alice and the White Queen advance into the chessboard's fifth rank by crossing over a brook together, but at the very moment of the crossing, the Queen transforms into a talking Sheep in a small shop. Alice soon finds herself struggling to handle the oars of a small rowboat, where the Sheep annoys her with (seemingly) nonsensical shouting about "crabs" and "feathers".

Chapter Six – Humpty Dumpty: After crossing yet another brook into the sixth rank, Alice immediately encounters Humpty Dumpty, who, besides celebrating his unbirthday, provides his own translation of the strange terms in "Jabberwocky". In the process, he introduces Alice to the concept of portmanteau words, before his inevitable fall.

Chapter Seven – The Lion and the Unicorn: *"All the king's horses and all the king's men"* come to Humpty Dumpty's assistance, and are accompanied by the White King, along with the Lion and the Unicorn, who again proceed to act out a nursery rhyme by fighting with each other. In this chapter, the March Hare and Hatter of the first book make a brief re-appearance in the guise of "Anglo-Saxon messengers" called "Haigha" and "Hatta".

Chapter Eight – "It's my own Invention": Upon leaving the Lion and Unicorn to their fight, Alice reaches the seventh rank by crossing another brook into the forested territory of the Red Knight, who is intent on capturing the "white pawn"—Alice—until the White Knight comes to her rescue. Escorting her through the forest towards the final brook-crossing, the Knight recites a long poem of his own composition called Haddocks' Eyes, and repeatedly falls off his horse.

Chapter Nine – Queen Alice: Bidding farewell to the White Knight, Alice steps across the last brook, and is automatically crowned a queen, with the crown materialising abruptly on her head. She soon finds herself in the company of both the White and Red Queens, who relentlessly confound Alice by using word play to thwart her attempts at logical discussion. They then invite one another to a party that will be hosted by the newly crowned Alice—of which Alice herself had no prior knowledge.

Chapter Ten – Shaking: Alice arrives and seats herself at her own party, which quickly turns into chaos. Alice finally grabs the Red Queen, believing her to be responsible for all the day's nonsense, and begins shaking her.

Chapter Eleven – Waking: Alice awakes in her armchair to find herself holding the black kitten, who she deduces to have been the Red Queen all along, with the white kitten having been the White Queen.

Chapter Twelve – Which dreamed it?: The story ends with Alice recalling the speculation of the Tweedle brothers, that everything may have been a dream of the Red King, and that Alice might herself be no more than a figment of *his* imagination. The book ends with the line "Life, what is it but a dream?"