

Through the Looking Glass

An adaptation by Josephine Czarnecki & Darwin Garrett

Based on the novel by Lewis Carroll

Square Zero

(Lights out. Curtain opens in blackout, and lights up again to reveal ALICE center stage, sitting in a chair in front of a flat, where we see the Looking Glass in the wall. A table with a chess board and set sit to the stage left of ALICE, who is lecturing Kitty, asleep in the basket on the floor. Perhaps she has knitting or something like yarn intertwined in her fingers.)

ALICE: Kitty, can you play chess? Now, don't smile, I'm asking it seriously. Because when we were just playing you watched as if you understood, and when I said "check!" you purred! Well it was a nice check kitty, and really I might have won if it hadn't been for that nasty knight that came wriggling down among my pieces. Kitty dear, let's pretend that you're the Red Queen. Do you know, I think if you've sat up and folded your arms you'd look exactly like her. Now do try, there's a dear. *(Moves the Red Queen to model for Kitty. Kitty is a cat, and a stuffed one at that, and cannot fold her arms, so ALICE punishes her by holding her up to the looking-glass.)* And if you're not good directly, I'll put you through into Looking-Glass House, how would you like that? Now if you only attend, Kitty, and not talk so much, I'll tell you all my ideas about Looking-Glass house. First, there's a room, you can see through the glass that is just the same as our drawing room. Only the things go the other way. I can see all of it when I get upon a chair. All but the bit just behind the Looking-Glass, oh I do wish I could see that bit. I want so much to know what hangs on the walls next to it there. And I do so wonder, Kitty, what lies past the door to the passage. Now let's pretend there's a way of getting into it somehow, kitty. Let's pretend the glass is got all soft like gauze, so that we can get through... why it's turning into sort of a mist now, I declare! Let's pretend I've got one foot in, and then the other foot, and then all the rest of me... I say it's quite easy now! *(ALICE sets down Kitty, and steps through the hole in the flat that is the mirror. As she does so, four actors who are CHESS PIECES and waiting on either side of the flat, rotate it as she crawls through so that when she arrives in Looking-Glass Land, she is entering downstage. Begin some soundcue.)*

Square One

(ALL CHESS PIECES are there, entering from parts of the stage and enacting some high-falutin croquet type game. Is its croquet? A garden party from the 1950s? Who knows.)

RED QUEEN, RED KING, RED KNIGHT, WHITE QUEEN, WHITE KING, WHITE KNIGHT, TWEEDLES, JACK, JILL, HUMPTY, WALRUS, CARPENTER, HATTER, CUCKOO, PAWNS? A chaotic game)

RED QUEEN: No! This is all wrong! Erase it and do it again! And you! Are you *sleeping!*? Get up! (*Referring to something that is not erasable, probably a wrong move from the RED KNIGHT. The RED KING is snoring on the ground, he mumbles a little and does not wake up.*)

RED Q: Fool! You can barely move one step at a time, how are you supposed to finish the game at that rate?

RED KNIGHT: Haha! You are in danger my sire! (*to the WHITE KING*)

WHITE KING: Gah! You're always popping out of everywhere. Bad form! Bad form. It's bad form you know! (*Mumbling to absolutely no one listening*)

WHITE QUEEN: Is it? I hadn't... noticed...

ALICE: Why... it's a chess game! Well, not a game of chess, but, Chess playing a game! (*She is ignored*)

HATTER: Pardon me, my turn, my turn, move down, please!

CUCKOO: Cuckoo! It's true!

HATTER: Yes, thank you Cuckoo, you've always understood me.

WHITE KNIGHT: It is not your turn my strangely hatted foe! You unchivalrous barbarian! You--

HATTER: Is too!

CUCKOO: Is too! Cuckoo!

W. KNIGHT: Is not!

HATTER: Is too!

W. KNIGHT: Is not!

HATTER: Is not!

W. KNIGHT: Is too! Wait a--

HATTER: Well, you heard the man (*Takes a shot of croquet*)

R. QUEEN: OUT OF LINE! (*She knocks HATTER down.*) Red Queen to White Pawn!

ALICE: Um, excuse me! My name is Alice, and I was wondering--

WHITE QUEEN: Aha! My missing pawn! My darling pawn! Our game is complete again!

ALL: Huzzah/Hip hip/jolly good/excellent/well whaddaya know!

ALICE: I'm not a pawn! I'm just a little girl.

TWEEDLE DEE: That's just what a pawn would say!

ALICE: I'm just a little girl, and I've just come through the Looking-Glass you see, and I was wondering if I might go and explore the rest of this land. I so want to know what's beyond the hall, that's all I can see from *my* side of the Looking-Glass....

RED QUEEN: Well obviously, as you are from Not Here. *This* is Looking-Glass Land. And why are you asking permission to go explore?

ALICE: Well, where I'm from it's polite to ask before you go off in someone else's home...

WHITE QUEEN: But you're not where you're from, dearie

RED QUEEN: You're where you are

TWEEDLES: Which is HERE.

RED QUEEN: And the rules are different, *here*

ALICE: How different? I suppose, everything must be backwards, since I've gone through a Looking-Glass. Perhaps it is polite to be rude, and rude to be polite? It would explain their behaviour...

HATTER: Precisely! Not at all! Now you've got it.

ALICE: Oh dear.

HATTER: Say you wanted to read a poem

ALICE: I would rather--

HATTER: The poem would sound something like.... *(He blows a whistle)*

(They arrange in a line, ALICE on stage Left: [DUM/DEE][WAL/CARP][JACK/JILL]

DUM: Outgrabe raths mome the and

DEE: borogroves the were

WALRUS: mimsy all

CARPENTER: wabe the in gimble

JACK: and gyre did toves

JILL: Slithy the and brillig twas!

HATTER: Music to my ears!

ALICE: Oh dear...

HATTER: But if you hear it in the Looking-Glass it might say *(blows whistle: rearrange:*

JILL[JACK CARP][WALRUS DEE] [DUM

JILL: Twas brillig and the slithy

JACK: Toves, Did gyre and

CARPENTER: gimble in the wabe

WALRUS: All mimsy

DEE: Were the borogroves

DUM: And the mome raths outgrabe.

ALICE: But what does it--

HATTER: ATTENTION! *(Blows whistle, all face straight on)*

JILL: Beware the Jabberwock my son!

The Jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

JACK: Beware the jubjub bird, and shun

The frumious Bandersnatch!

CARPENTER: He took his vorpal sword in hand

Long time the manxome foe he sought-

WALRUS: So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought

DEE: And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame

DUM: Came whiffling through the tulgey wood
And burbled as it came!

JILL: One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!

JACK: He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

CARPENTER: 'And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, oh beamish boy!

WALRUS: O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!
He chortled in his joy.

HATTER: Bravo! Bravo!! *(Claps, alone)*

ALICE: It seems rather pretty, but rather hard to understand. It fills my head with ideas--only I don't exactly know what they are!

RED QUEEN: ENOUGH! Enough of this pitter-pattering brandywash! It is high time for the game to begin!

ALL: Aye/hearhear/suuurreee/true! true!

HATTER: Pla-CES!

(ALL arrange in color on either side, the two kings come Center and stand back to back. Their respective knights arms them with pistols (or something ridiculous) and act as second.)

HATTER: On three paces then! Fire at will!

DUM: *(To DEE)* Look out Will, I always say...

HATTER: One... Two... THREE!

(There is the sound of a gunshot-- the beginning of a Horse Race that sound plays, ENTER FOG MACHINE, pandemonium, all chess pieces run offstage to begin The Game. ALICE is left alone, in The Garden.)

Square Two

ALICE: Hello? Hello? Anyone... pardon? *(Wandering the stage wondering what's going on, the flowers are brought on by themselves and appear as ALICE turns to face them. It is a flowerbed of FLOWERS, hair in curlers under hair dryers and thus glued to their chairs.)*

ALICE: Oh a tigerlily! I wish they could talk, wouldn't that be wonderful? I wonder what they would say.

TIGERLILY: *(From behind her magazine)* I can talk, when there's anybody worth talking to. *(All FLOWERS snicker rudely, and switch their legs-crossing sassily)*

ALICE: And can all the flowers talk?

TIGERLILY: As well as *you* can
(*FLOWERS snicker again*)

ROSE: It isn't polite for us to talk first, you know. (*They all close their magazine and put them down to look at ALICE.*) And I really was wondering when you'd start speaking. Said to myself, her face has got some sense in it, even if it's not a whole lot. Still, you're the right color blue, and that goes a long way.

TIGERLILY: I don't care about the color. If only her petals curled up a little more, she'd be alright.

ALICE: Aren't you sometimes frightened, being planted out here with nobody to take care of you?

ROSE: There's the tree in the middle, what else is it good for?

ALICE: But what could it do if any danger came?

ROSE: It could bark! (*lol*)

DAISY: It says-- BOUGH-WOW! (*No one thinks this is funny.*) That's why its branches are called BOUGHS!

DAFFODIL: Didn't you know that!?! (*FLOWERS snicker*)

TIGERLILY: Shut yer gabs! (*To ALICE*) They know I can't get at them, or they wouldn't try it.

ALICE: Nevermind... (*To DAISY and ANOTHER DAISY*) If you're not silent, I'll *pick you*.

TIGERLILY: That's right! The daisies are the worst of all, when one speaks, the rest can't help but join in. It's enough to make one wither, the way they go on.

ALICE: How is it you can all talk so nicely? (*Trying to change the subject*) I've been in many gardens before but none of the flowers could talk!

TIGERLILY: Put your hand down and feel the ground, and then you'll know why.

ALICE: (*Knocks on the stage floor*) It's very hard, but I don't see what that has to do with it.

TIGERLILY: In most gardens, they make the ground too soft, so that the flowers are always asleep.

ALICE: Oh, I never thought of that before...

ROSE: It's my opinion that she never thinks at all.

VIOLET: I never saw anybody that looked stupider.

TIGERLILY: Hold *your* tongue, as if you ever saw anybody. You keep your head under the leaves and snore away there, til you have no idea what's going on in the world than if you were just a baby bud!

ALICE: Are there any more people in the garden except me?

ROSE: There is one other flower in the garden who can move about like you. I wonder how you do it.

TIGERLILY: She's *always* wondering.

ROSE: But she's more bushy than you are.

ALICE: Is she like me? There's another girl in garden somewhere?

ROSE: Well, she has the same awkward shape as you
(*FLOWERS all snicker.*)

TIGERLILY: But she's redder, and her petals are shorter, I think. They're done up close, like a Dahlia. Not tumbled about like yours.

ROSE: But you just can't help it, I'm sure. When you begin to fade, you can't but get a little untidy.

ALICE: Does she ever come here? (*Ignoring these rude remarks.*)

TIGERLILY: I daresay you shall see her soon. She one of the kind that has nine spikes you know.

ALICE: Where does she wear them?

ROSE: Why, all around her head of course. I was wondering why you hadn't got them too. I thought it was in vogue.

ALICE: Oh, the queen!

LARKSPUR: She's coming!

ALICE: Wouldn't it be grand to talk to a real queen? I believe I'll go and meet her.

ROSE: You shouldn't do that, I advise you walk the other way.

ALICE: That's rather silly advice. Thank you...

Square 2.1

(*ALICE moves off SR where the RQ was spotted. As she does this, the FLOWERS deconstruct their setup and exit off Left. There is some more theatre magic about moving to locations and such.*)

R QUEEN: Where do you come from? And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time!

ALICE: I'm sorry ma'am, I seem to have lost my way...

RQ: I don't know what you mean by *your* way. All the ways here belong to me. Even this one, right now, is my way, and you are in it!

ALICE: I'm--

RQ: But why are you here at all? Curtsey while you're thinking what to say, it saves time. (*QUEEN checks her watch.*) It's time for you to answer now, open your mouth a little wider when you speak, and always say "your majesty".

ALICE: I wanted to see what the garden was like, Your Majesty.

RQ: That's right. (*Pats her on the head condescendingly.*) Though when you say "garden," I've seen gardens that would make this look like *wilderness*.

ALICE: ... I thought I might try to get to the top of that hill!

RQ: *I've* seen hills that would make you call that a valley

ALICE: That's nonsense, a hill *can't* be a valley.

RQ: You think *that's* nonsense, but I've heard nonsense that would make this look like a dictionary! Now, are you here to play the game?

ALICE: What game?

RQ: Don't ask stupid questions, girl! You are in the second square now. Do you wish to continue on to the eighth or will you be forfeiting now? Think carefully. If you make it to the eighth you just might be queened.

ALICE: Me, a queen? Oh, it's chess! It must be! And I am a pawn, I suppose?

RQ: Obviously. *(Looking her up and down.)* Now quickly! Run!

(They begin running at once, as fast as they can, but seem to be getting absolutely nowhere.)

ALICE: Why aren't we moving at all??

RQ: Faster! Don't try to talk!

ALICE: Are we nearly there??