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*Alice in Blunderland:
An Iridescent Dream*



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Chapter I

OFF TO BLUNDERLAND

It was one of those dull, drab, depressing days when somehow or other it seemed as if there wasn't anything anywhere for anybody to do. It was raining outdoors, so that Alice could not amuse herself in the garden, or call upon her friend Little Lord Fauntleroy up the street; and downstairs her mother was giving a Bridge Party for the benefit of the M.O. Hot Tamale Company, which had lately fallen upon evil days. Alice's mother was a very charitably disposed person, and while she loathed gambling in all its forms, was nevertheless willing for the sake of a good cause to forego her principles on alternate Thursdays. However, she was very particular that her little daughter should be kept aloof from contaminating influences, so that Alice found herself locked in the nursery and, as I have already intimated, with nothing to

do. She had read all her books—The House of Mirth, the novels of Hall Caine and Marie Corelli—the operation for appendicitis upon her dolly, while very successful indeed, had left poor Flaxilocks without a scrap of sawdust in her veins, and therefore unable to play. Moreover, worst of all, her pet kitten, under the new city law making all felines public property, had grown into a regular cat and appeared only at mealtimes, and then in so disreputable a condition that he was not thought to be fit company for a child of seven.

“Oh, dear!” cried Alice impatiently, as she sat rocking in her chair, listening to the pattering of the rain upon the roof of the veranda. “I do wish there was something to do, or somebody to do, or somewhere to go. The Gov’ment ought to provide covered playgrounds for children on wet days. It wouldn’t cost much, to put a glass cover on the Park!”

“A very good, idea! I’ll make a note of that,” said a squeaky little voice at her side.

Alice sprang to her feet in surprise. She had supposed she was alone, and for a moment she was frightened, but a glance



around reassured her, for strange to say, seated on the radiator warming his toes was her old friend the Hatter, the queer old chap she had met in her marvelous trip through Wonderland, and with him was the March Hare, the Cheshire Cat, and the White Knight from Looking Glass Land.

“Why—you dear old things!” she cried. “You here?”

“I don’t know about these others, but I’m here,” returned the Hatter. “The others seem to be here, but I respectfully decline to take my solemn daffydavy on the subject, because my doctor says I’m all the time seeing things that ain’t. Besides I don’t believe in swearing.”

“We’re here all right,” put in the March Hare. “I know because we ain’t anywhere else, and when you ain’t anywhere else you can make up your mind that you’re here.”



“Well, I’m awfully glad to see you,” said Alice. “I’ve been so lonesome——”

“We know that,” said the White Knight. “We’ve been studying your case lately and we thought we’d come down and see what we could do for you. The fact is the Hatter here has founded a model city, where everything goes just right, and we came to ask you to pay us a call.”

“A city?” cried Alice.

“Yep,” said the March Hare. “It’s called Blunderland and between you and me I don’t believe anybody but the Hatter could have invented one like it. His geegantic brain conceived the whole thing, and I tell you it’s a corker.”

“Where is it?” asked Alice.

“That’s telling,” said the Hatter. “I haven’t had it copyrighted yet, and until I do I ain’t going to tell where it is. You can’t be too careful about property these days with copperations lurkin’ around everywhere to grab everything in sight.”

“What’s a copperation?” asked Alice.

“What? Never heard of a Copperation?” demanded the Hatter. “Mercy! Ever hear of the Mumps, or the Measles, or the Whooping Cough?”

“Yes—but I never knew they were called Copperations,” said Alice.



“Well, they ain’t, but they’re no worse—so they ought to be,” said the Hatter. “Listen here. I’ll tell you what a copperation is.”

In addition, putting his hat in front of his mouth like a telephone the Hatter recited the following poem through it:

THE COPPERATION

*A copperation is a beast
With forty leven paws
That doesn’t ever pay the least
Attention to the laws.*

*It grabs whatever comes in sight
From hansom cabs to socks.
And with a grin of mad delight
It turns ‘em into stocks.*

*And then it takes a rubber hose
Connected with the sea
And pumps em full of H_2O_s
Of various degree*

*And when they’re swollen up so stout
You’d think they’d surely bust
They souse ‘em once again and out
They come at last a Trust*

*And when the Trust is ready for
One last and final whack
They let the public in the door
To buy the water back.*

“See?” said the Hatter as he finished.

“No,” said Alice. “It sounded very pretty through your hat, but I don’t understand it. Why should people buy water when they can get it for nothing in the ocean?”

“You’re like all the rest,” groaned the Hatter. “Nobody seems to understand but me, and somehow or other I can’t make it clear to other people.”

“You might if you didn’t talk through your hat,” grinned the Cheshire Cat.

“Then I’d have to stop being a public character,” said the Hatter. “I’m not going to sacrifice my career just because you’re too ignorant to see what I’m driving at. I don’t mind telling you though, Alice, that outside of poetry a Copperation is a Creature devised by Selfish Interests to secure the Free Coinage of the Atlantic Ocean.”

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