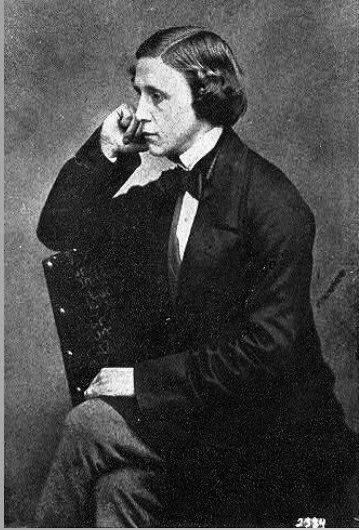


Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
by Lewis Carroll
1898 edition cover

Who is Lewis Carroll?



Charles Dodgson
1855

- Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was born in Daresbury, a small English village where his father was rector of the church. He was the oldest of eleven children, mostly girls.
- In 1850 he entered Christ Church College, Oxford. His stutter prevented him from becoming a clergyman like his father. Instead, he spent his life teaching.
- He became an excellent photographer and a lecturer in mathematics in the college, and he lived for the rest of his life in rooms there.
- He wrote stories for the school magazine under his pen name, Lewis Carroll, and continued to contribute stories and poems to a local paper.

Origins of the Adventures



Alice, key in hand, finds the door to Wonderland

Sir John Tenniel, 1865

Wood-engraving by Dalziel

Illustration for the first chapter of Lewis Carroll's

Alice in Wonderland

Image Credit: *Victorian Web*

- “On July 4, 1862, Carroll took a river boat ride with the three young daughters of the college dean, Lorina, Alice, and Edith Liddel. He told them a story about "Alice's Adventures Underground." When little Alice coaxed him to write out the story for her, he did so, calling it "Alice's Hour in Elfland."
- In 1864 it became *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and artist John Tenniel was asked to illustrate it.
- His nephew writes, "His memory was so good that I believe that the story as he wrote it down was almost word for word the same that he had told in the boat."
- In time he added a sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*, which was equally popular."

The Appeal of Alice

- “There are a certain clarity and hardness in Alice's logical world which appeal to the modern reader, as reflecting our notion of the innocence of the child
- she is direct, positive, innocent of degrading emotional display, self-dramatization, deceit, and role-playing which burgeon all around her;
- she is constantly attempting to make rational sense of the messy world of other people's emotions.”

Historical Context

- The 1865 novel has a fantasy setting, so the historical context comes from the contemporary events of Lewis Carroll's time
- *Queen Victoria (1819-1901)* - Victoria ascended to the British throne in 1837. She and her husband Albert gained the respect of the nation, restored some of the luster that had faded from the royal monarchy and developed Britain's colonial empire.
- *Science vs. Religion in Victorian England* - Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) suggested "natural selection" leading to "the survival of the fittest." The "creationist" movement was born at Oxford University where Carroll was a professor, so some scholars think that bits of these intellectual discussions surface in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
- *Carroll, Word Play, and Victorian Humor* - A mathematician by trade, Lewis Carroll had mixed feelings about words. He believed that their ambiguous nature led to infinite problems. Like the Victorian society for which Carroll wrote, the author found endless humor in punning. The novel also abounds with humorous references to poems typically taught to Victorian school children.
- *Victorian Education for Girls* - In Victorian England, the educational focus was on the manners a student acquired and the people with whom he or she associated. This emphasis was especially true for female students, who were educated around "accomplishments" such as music and drawing but a governess and tutors in the home. In the novel, Carroll's Alice remains continually concerned with the propriety of things.



Queen Victoria, 1819-1901, by Bassano, 1882. Glass copy negative, half-plate. National Portrait Gallery, London: NPG x95802

Memorable characters

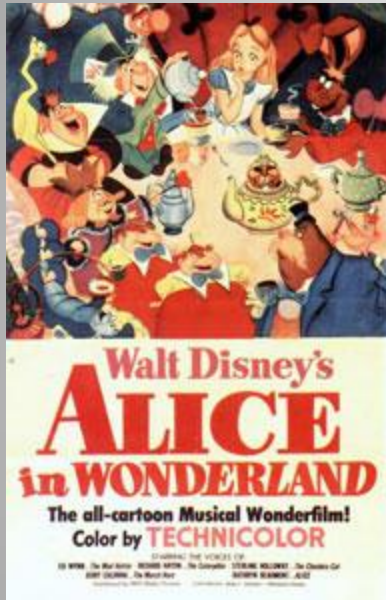
- **Alice** is seven years old
- **White Rabbit** reveals his aristocratic notions
- The **Mouse** and the **Dodo**
- The blue **Caterpillar** asks “Who are YOU?”
- **Duchess** – ugly, aggressive, and moralistic
- the diabolical **Cook** and squalling **Duchess’s baby**
- strangely smiling **Cheshire Cat**
- **March Hare**, the host of the Mad Tea Party
- **Mad Hatter** is blunt, outspoken and irrational
- The sleepy **Dormouse**
- The furious imperious **Queen of Hearts**
- the mild-mannered, kindly **King of Hearts**
- The shy poet **Knave of Hearts**
- the **Gryphon** seems to represent a tiresome adult , with his shallow sentimentality
- the constantly weeping and punning **Mock Turtle**
- **Five, Two, and Seven**: quarrelsome playing-card gardeners
- **Dinah** is Alice's beloved cat
- **Alice's sister**



“The Nursery Alice”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Alice_in_Wonderland.jpg

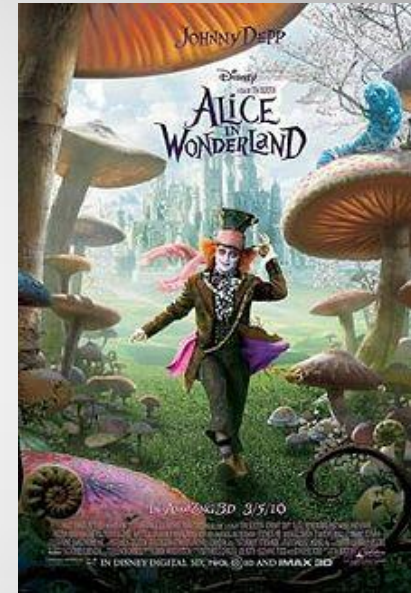
Media Adaptations



Alice in Wonderland (1951), traditional animation film, Walt Disney Animation Studios, with a focus on comedy, music and spectacle as opposed to rigid fidelity to the books



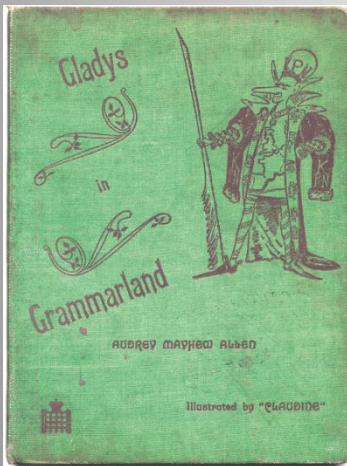
Alice in Wonderland (1985) is a two-part film adaptation starring Natalie Gregory, Red Buttons, Anthony Newley, Jayne Meadows, Carol Channing, Roddy McDowall, Ann Jillian and Robert Morley.



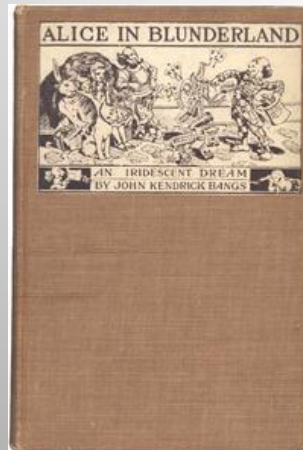
Alice in Wonderland, (2010), a film by Tim Burton, starring Johnny Depp as the Mad Hatter in which a 19-year-old Alice played by Mia Wasikowska returns to Wonderland for more adventures.

Alice-Inspirations

- Imitations, parodies, continuations, retellings
- The primary wave of *Alice*-inspired works slackened after about 1920
- Lewis Carroll's influence on other writers has never fully waned, and *Alice*-inspired works continue to be published



1897 educational imitation "Gladys in Grammarland"



1907 *Alice in Blunderland*, a parody by American humourist John Kendrick Bangs making fun of big business and big government.



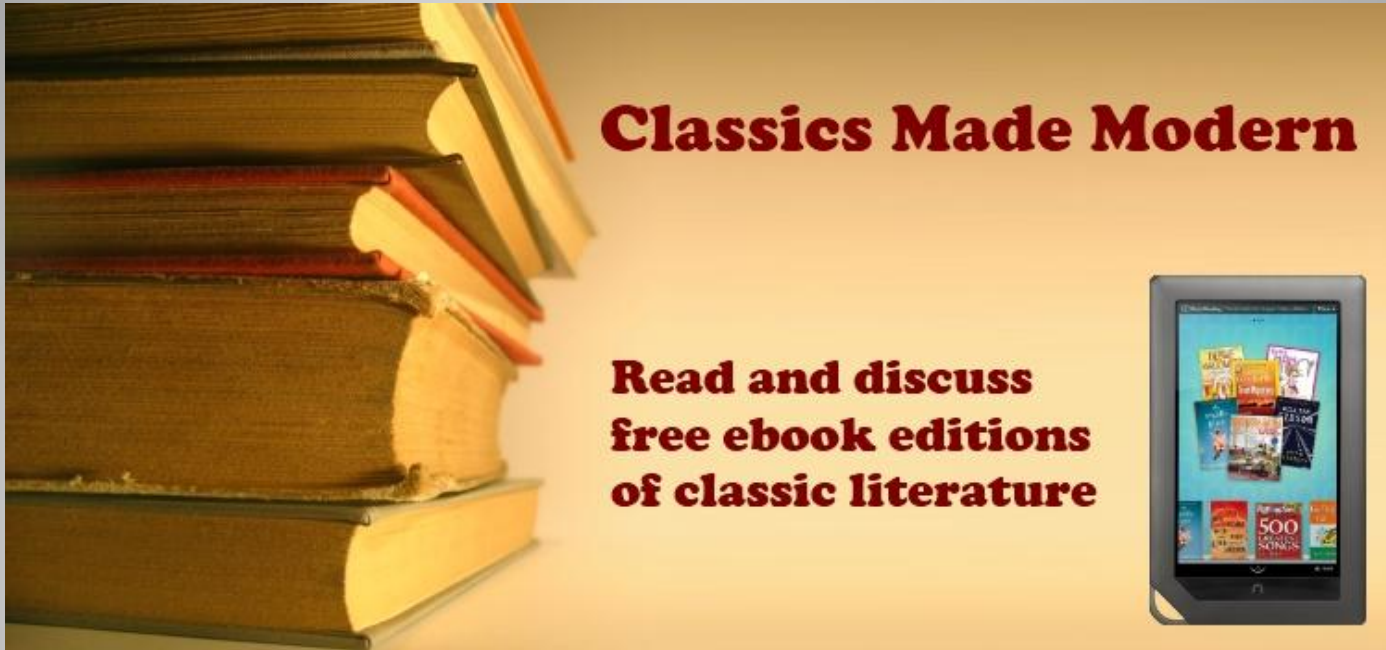
A 2006 alternative- fantasy-trilogy which implies that Alice was sent to Earth when the Evil Queen Conquered Wonderland

Reception of the novel

- Carroll first published his novel in 1865, but due to poor reproductions of Tenniel's illustrations, the work was immediately recalled.
- Although a review in the highly respected journal *Athenaeum* complained that the story was stiff and overdone, it met with immediate commercial success.
- By 1900, 180,000 copies of the book had been sold. Carroll began his sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*, in 1867.
- According to an 1898 article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Carroll's Alice books were often quoted by newspapers and periodicals of the era, so much so that only Shakespeare's works were quoted with greater frequency.

Critical reception of *Alice*

- “Mr. Carroll has laboured hard to heap together strange adventures and heterogeneous combinations, and we acknowledge the hard labour. Mr. Tenniel, again, is square and grim and uncouth in all his illustrations, howbeit clever, even to the verge of grandeur, as is the artist's habit. We fancy that any real child might be more puzzled than enchanted by this stiff, overwrought story.”
-Anonymous review in "Children's Books" (1865)
- “[Alice] is the only child's book of nonsense which is never childish though it always appeals to a child; where there is no writing down to the understanding of a child, though it can always be understood by a child. It is, in a word, a book of that extremely rare kind which will belong to all the generations to come until the language becomes obsolete.”
-Sir Walter Besant, 1897
- "I'm very much afraid I didn't mean anything but nonsense. Still, you know, words mean much more than we mean to express when we use them; so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant. So, whatever good meanings are in the book, I'm very glad to accept as the meaning of the book."
-Lewis Carroll, *A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll to his Child-Friends* (1933)
- -"the real beginning of modern literature for children; here ... for the first time we find a story designed for children without a trace of a lesson or moral."
-Anne Eaton, *A Critical History of Children's Literature*



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