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She caught the shawl as she spoke, and looked about for the owner: in another moment the White Queen came running wildly through the wood, with both arms stretched out wide, as if she were flying, and Alice very civilly went to meet her with the shawl.
'I'm very glad I happened to be in the way,' Alice said, as she helped her to put on her shawl again.

The White Queen only looked at her in a helpless frightened sort of way, and kept repeating something in a whisper to herself that sounded like 'bread-and-butter, bread-and-butter,' and Alice felt that if there was to be any conversation at all, she must manage it herself. So she began rather timidly: 'Am I addressing the White Queen?'

'Well, yes, if you call that a-dressing,' The Queen said. 'It isn't *my* notion of the thing, at all.'
Alice thought it would never do to have an argument at the very beginning of their conversation, so she smiled and said, 'If your Majesty will only tell me the right way to begin, I'll do it as well as I can.'

'But I don't want it done at all!' groaned the poor Queen. 'I've been a-dressing myself for the last two hours.'

It would have been all the better, as it seemed to Alice, if she had got some one else to dress her, she was so dreadfully untidy. 'Every single thing's crooked,' Alice thought to herself, 'and she's all over pins!—may I put your shawl straight for you?' she added aloud.

'I don't know what's the matter with it!' the Queen said, in a melancholy voice. 'It's out of temper, I think. I've pinned it here, and I've pinned it there, but there's no pleasing it!'

'It *can't* go straight, you know, if you pin it all on one side,' Alice said, as she gently put it right for her; 'and, dear me, what a state your hair is in!'
'The brush has got entangled in it!' the Queen said with a sigh. 'And I lost the comb yesterday.'

Alice carefully released the brush, and did her best to get the hair into order. 'Come, you look rather better now!' she said, after altering most of the pins. 'But really you should have a lady's maid!'

'I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure!' the Queen said. 'Twopence a week, and jam every other day.'

Alice couldn't help laughing, as she said, 'I don't want you to hire *me*—and I don't care for jam.'
'It's very good jam,' said the Queen.

'Well, I don't want any *to-day*, at any rate.'
'You couldn't have it if you *did* want it,' the Queen said. 'The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never jam to-day.'
'It *must* come sometimes to "jam to-day,"' Alice objected.
'No, it can't,' said the Queen. 'It's jam every *other* day: to-day isn't any *other* day, you know.'
'I don't understand you,' said Alice. 'It's dreadfully confusing!'

'That's the effect of living backwards,' the Queen said kindly: 'it always makes one a little giddy at first—'

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‘Living backwards!’ Alice repeated in great astonishment. ‘I never heard of such a thing!’

‘—but there’s one great advantage in it, that one’s memory works both ways.’

‘I’m sure *mine* only works one way,’ Alice remarked. ‘I can’t remember things before they happen.’
‘It’s a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,’ the Queen remarked.

‘What sort of things do *you* remember best?’ Alice ventured to ask.
‘Oh, things that happened the week after next,’ the Queen replied in a careless tone. ‘For instance, now,’ she went on, sticking a large piece of plaster on her finger as she spoke, ‘there’s the King’s Messenger. He’s in prison now, being punished: and the trial doesn’t even begin till next Wednesday: and of course the crime comes last of all.’

‘Suppose he never commits the crime?’ said Alice.

‘That would be all the better, wouldn’t it?’ the Queen said, as she bound the plaster round her finger with a bit of ribbon.

Alice felt there was no denying *that*. ‘Of course it would be all the better,’ she said: ‘but it wouldn’t be all the better his being punished.’
‘You’re wrong *there*, at any rate,’ said the Queen: ‘were *you* ever punished?’
‘Only for faults,’ said Alice.

‘And you were all the better for it, I know!’ the Queen said triumphantly.

‘Yes, but then I *had* done the things I was punished for,’ said Alice: ‘that makes all the difference.’
‘But if you *hadn’t* done them,’ the Queen said, ‘that would have been better still; better, and better, and better!’ Her voice went higher with each ‘better,’ till it got quite to a squeak at last. Alice was just beginning to say ‘There’s a mistake somewhere—,’ when the Queen began screaming so loud that she had to leave the sentence unfinished. ‘Oh, oh, oh!’ shouted the Queen, shaking her hand about as if she wanted to shake it off. ‘My finger’s bleeding! Oh, oh, oh, oh!’

Her screams were so exactly like the whistle of a steam-engine, that Alice had to hold both her hands over her ears.

‘What *is* the matter?’ she said, as soon as there was a chance of making herself heard. ‘Have you pricked your finger?’
‘I haven’t pricked it *yet*,’ the Queen said, ‘but I soon shall—oh, oh, oh!’
‘When do you expect to do it?’ Alice asked, feeling very much inclined to laugh.

‘When I fasten my shawl again,’ the poor Queen groaned out: ‘the brooch will come undone directly. Oh, oh!’ As she said the words the brooch flew open, and the Queen clutched wildly at it, and tried to clasp it again.

‘Take care!’ cried Alice. ‘You’re holding it all crooked!’ And she caught at the brooch; but it was too late: the pin had slipped, and the Queen had pricked her finger.

‘That accounts for the bleeding, you see,’ she said to Alice with a smile. ‘Now you understand the way things happen here.’

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‘But why don’t you scream now?’ Alice asked, holding her hands ready to put over her ears again.

‘Why, I’ve done all the screaming already,’ said the Queen. ‘What would be the good of having it all over again?’

By this time it was getting light. ‘The crow must have flown away, I think,’ said Alice: ‘I’m so glad it’s gone. I thought it was the night coming on.’

‘I wish *I* could manage to be glad!’ the Queen said. ‘Only I never can remember the rule. You must be very happy, living in this wood, and being glad whenever you like!’
‘Only it is so *very* lonely here!’ Alice said in a melancholy voice; and at the thought of her loneliness two large tears came rolling down her cheeks.
‘Oh, don’t go on like that!’ cried the poor Queen, wringing her hands in despair. ‘Consider what a great girl you are. Consider what a long way you’ve come to-day. Consider what o’clock it is. Consider anything, only don’t cry!’

Alice could not help laughing at this, even in the midst of her tears. ‘Can *you* keep from crying by considering things?’ she asked.
‘That’s the way it’s done,’ the Queen said with great decision: ‘nobody can do two things at once, you know. Let’s consider your age to begin with—how old are you?’

‘I’m seven and a half exactly.’

‘You needn’t say “exactually,”’ the Queen remarked: ‘I can believe it without that. Now I’ll give *you* something to believe. I’m just one hundred and one, five months and a day.’
‘I can’t believe *that*!’ said Alice.
‘Can’t you?’ the Queen said in a pitying tone. ‘Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes.’

Alice laughed. ‘There’s no use trying,’ she said: ‘one *can’t* believe impossible things.’
‘I daresay you haven’t had much practice,’ said the Queen. ‘When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast. There goes the shawl again!’

The brooch had come undone as she spoke, and a sudden gust of wind blew the Queen’s shawl across a little brook. The Queen spread out her arms again, and went flying after it, and this time she succeeded in catching it for herself. ‘I’ve got it!’ she cried in a triumphant tone. ‘Now you shall see me pin it on again, all by myself!’

‘Then I hope your finger is better now?’ Alice said very politely, as she crossed the little brook after the Queen.

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‘Oh, much better!’ cried the Queen, her voice rising to a squeak as she went on. ‘Much be-etter! Be-etter! Be-e-e-etter! Be-e-ehh!’ The last word ended in a long bleat, so like a sheep that Alice quite started.

She looked at the Queen, who seemed to have suddenly wrapped herself up in wool. Alice rubbed her eyes, and looked again. She couldn’t make out what had happened at all. Was she in a shop? And was that really—was it really a *sheep* that was sitting on the other side of the counter? Rub as she could, she could make nothing more of it: she was in a little dark shop, leaning with her elbows on the counter, and opposite to her was an old Sheep, sitting in an arm-chair knitting, and every now and then leaving off to look at her through a great pair of spectacles.
‘What is it you want to buy?’ the Sheep said at last, looking up for a moment from her knitting.

‘I don’t *quite* know yet,’ Alice said, very gently. ‘I should like to look all round me first, if I might.’
‘You may look in front of you, and on both sides, if you like,’ said the Sheep: ‘but you can’t look *all* round you—unless you’ve got eyes at the back of your head.’
But these, as it happened, Alice had *not* got: so she contented herself with turning round, looking at the shelves as she came to them.
The shop seemed to be full of all manner of curious things—but the oddest part of it all was, that whenever she looked hard at any shelf, to make out exactly what it had on it, that particular shelf was always quite empty: though the others round it were crowded as full as they could hold.

‘Things flow about so here!’ she said at last in a plaintive tone, after she had spent a minute or so in vainly pursuing a large bright thing, that looked sometimes like a doll and sometimes like a work-box, and was always in the shelf next above the one she was looking at. ‘And this one is the most provoking of all—but I’ll tell you what—’ she added, as a sudden thought struck her, ‘I’ll follow it up to the very top shelf of all. It’ll puzzle it to go through the ceiling, I expect!’

But even this plan failed: the ‘thing’ went through the ceiling as quietly as possible, as if it were quite used to it.

‘Are you a child or a teetotum?’ the Sheep said, as she took up another pair of needles. ‘You’ll make me giddy soon, if you go on turning round like that.’ She was now working with fourteen pairs at once, and Alice couldn’t help looking at her in great astonishment.

‘How *can* she knit with so many?’ the puzzled child thought to herself. ‘She gets more and more like a porcupine every minute!’
‘Can you row?’ the Sheep asked, handing her a pair of knitting-needles as she spoke.

‘Yes, a little—but not on land—and not with needles—’ Alice was beginning to say, when suddenly the needles turned into oars in her hands, and she found they were in a little boat, gliding along between banks: so there was nothing for it but to do her best.

‘Feather!’ cried the Sheep, as she took up another pair of needles.

This didn’t sound like a remark that needed any answer, so Alice said nothing, but pulled away. There was something very queer about the water, she thought, as every now and then the oars got fast in it, and would hardly come out again.

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‘Feather! Feather!’ the Sheep cried again, taking more needles. ‘You’ll be catching a crab directly.’

‘A dear little crab!’ thought Alice. ‘I should like that.’

‘Didn’t you hear me say “Feather”?’ the Sheep cried angrily, taking up quite a bunch of needles.

‘Indeed I did,’ said Alice: ‘you’ve said it very often—and very loud. Please, where *are* the crabs?’
‘In the water, of course!’ said the Sheep, sticking some of the needles into her hair, as her hands were full. ‘Feather, I say!’

‘*Why* do you say “feather” so often?’ Alice asked at last, rather vexed. ‘I’m not a bird!’
‘You are,’ said the Sheep: ‘you’re a little goose.’

This offended Alice a little, so there was no more conversation for a minute or two, while the boat glided gently on, sometimes among beds of weeds (which made the oars stick fast in the water, worse then ever), and sometimes under trees, but always with the same tall river-banks frowning over their heads.

‘Oh, please! There are some scented rushes!’ Alice cried in a sudden transport of delight. ‘There really are—and *such* beauties!’
‘You needn’t say “please” to *me* about ‘em,’ the Sheep said, without looking up from her knitting: ‘I didn’t put ‘em there, and I’m not going to take ‘em away.’
‘No, but I meant—please, may we wait and pick some?’ Alice pleaded. ‘If you don’t mind stopping the boat for a minute.’

‘How am *I* to stop it?’ said the Sheep. ‘If you leave off rowing, it’ll stop of itself.’
So the boat was left to drift down the stream as it would, till it glided gently in among the waving rushes. And then the little sleeves were carefully rolled up, and the little arms were plunged in elbow-deep to get the rushes a good long way down before breaking them off—and for a while Alice forgot all about the Sheep and the knitting, as she bent over the side of the boat, with just the ends of her tangled hair dipping into the water—while with bright eager eyes she caught at one bunch after another of the darling scented rushes.

‘I only hope the boat won’t tipple over!’ she said to herself. ‘Oh, *what* a lovely one! Only I couldn’t quite reach it.’ ‘And it certainly *did* seem a little provoking (‘almost as if it happened on purpose,’ she thought) that, though she managed to pick plenty of beautiful rushes as the boat glided by, there was always a more lovely one that she couldn’t reach.
‘The prettiest are always further!’ she said at last, with a sigh at the obstinacy of the rushes in growing so far off, as, with flushed cheeks and dripping hair and hands, she scrambled back into her place, and began to arrange her new-found treasures.

What mattered it to her just then that the rushes had begun to fade, and to lose all their scent and beauty, from the very moment that she picked them? Even real scented rushes, you know, last only a very little while—and these, being dream-rushes, melted away almost like snow, as they lay in heaps at her feet—but Alice hardly noticed this, there were so many other curious things to think about.

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They hadn't gone much farther before the blade of one of the oars got fast in the water and *wouldn't* come out again (so Alice explained it afterwards), and the consequence was that the handle of it caught her under the chin, and, in spite of a series of little shrieks of 'Oh, oh, oh!' from poor Alice, it swept her straight off the seat, and down among the heap of rushes. However, she wasn't hurt, and was soon up again: the Sheep went on with her knitting all the while, just as if nothing had happened. 'That was a nice crab you caught!' she remarked, as Alice got back into her place, very much relieved to find herself still in the boat.

'Was it? I didn't see it,' Said Alice, peeping cautiously over the side of the boat into the dark water. 'I wish it hadn't let go—I should so like to see a little crab to take home with me!' But the Sheep only laughed scornfully, and went on with her knitting.

'Are there many crabs here?' said Alice.

'Crabs, and all sorts of things,' said the Sheep: 'plenty of choice, only make up your mind. Now, what *do* you want to buy?'
'To buy!' Alice echoed in a tone that was half astonished and half frightened—for the oars, and the boat, and the river, had vanished all in a moment, and she was back again in the little dark shop.

'I should like to buy an egg, please,' she said timidly. 'How do you sell them?'

'Fivepence farthing for one—Twopence for two,' the Sheep replied.

'Then two are cheaper than one?' Alice said in a surprised tone, taking out her purse.

'Only you *must* eat them both, if you buy two,' said the Sheep.
'Then I'll have *one*, please,' said Alice, as she put the money down on the counter. For she thought to herself, 'They mightn't be at all nice, you know.'
The Sheep took the money, and put it away in a box: then she said 'I never put things into people's hands—that would never do—you must get it for yourself.' And so saying, she went off to the other end of the shop, and set the egg upright on a shelf.

'I wonder *why* it wouldn't do?' thought Alice, as she groped her way among the tables and chairs, for the shop was very dark towards the end. 'The egg seems to get further away the more I walk towards it. Let me see, is this a chair? Why, it's got branches, I declare! How very odd to find trees growing here! And actually here's a little brook! Well, this is the very queerest shop I ever saw!'

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So she went on, wondering more and more at every step, as everything turned into a tree the moment she came up to it, and she quite expected the egg to do the same.

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However, the egg only got larger and larger, and more and more human: when she had come within a few yards of it, she saw that it had eyes and a nose and mouth; and when she had come close to it, she saw clearly that it was HUMPTY DUMPTY himself. 'It can't be anybody else!' she said to herself. 'I'm as certain of it, as if his name were written all over his face.'
It might have been written a hundred times, easily, on that enormous face. Humpty Dumpty was sitting with his legs crossed, like a Turk, on the top of a high wall—such a narrow one that Alice quite wondered how he could keep his balance—and, as his eyes were steadily fixed in the opposite direction, and he didn't take the least notice of her, she thought he must be a stuffed figure after all.

'And how exactly like an egg he is!' she said aloud, standing with her hands ready to catch him, for she was every moment expecting him to fall.

'It's *very* provoking,' Humpty Dumpty said after a long silence, looking away from Alice as he spoke, 'to be called an egg—*Very!*'
'I said you *looked* like an egg, Sir,' Alice gently explained. 'And some eggs are very pretty, you know' she added, hoping to turn her remark into a sort of a compliment.
'Some people,' said Humpty Dumpty, looking away from her as usual, 'have no more sense than a baby!'

Alice didn't know what to say to this: it wasn't at all like conversation, she thought, as he never said anything to *her*; in fact, his last remark was evidently addressed to a tree—so she stood and softly repeated to herself:—
'Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall:
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King's horses and all the King's men
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty in his place again.'
'That last line is much too long for the poetry,' she added, almost out loud, forgetting that Humpty Dumpty would hear her.

'Don't stand there chattering to yourself like that,' Humpty Dumpty said, looking at her for the first time, 'but tell me your name and your business.'

'My *name* is Alice, but—'
'It's a stupid enough name!' Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. 'What does it mean?'

'*Must* a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.
'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: '*my* name means the shape I am—and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.'
'Why do you sit out here all alone?' said Alice, not wishing to begin an argument.

'Why, because there's nobody with me!' cried Humpty Dumpty. 'Did you think I didn't know the answer to *that*? Ask another.'
'Don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground?' Alice went on, not with any idea of making another riddle, but simply in her good-natured anxiety for the queer creature. 'That wall is so *very* narrow!'
'What tremendously easy riddles you ask!' Humpty Dumpty growled out. 'Of course I don't think so! Why, if ever I *did* fall off—which there's no chance of—but *if* I did—' Here he pursed

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his lips and looked so solemn and grand that Alice could hardly help laughing. '*If* I did fall,' he went on, '*The King has promised me—with his very own mouth*—to—to—'
'To send all his horses and all his men,' Alice interrupted, rather unwisely.

'Now I declare that's too bad!' Humpty Dumpty cried, breaking into a sudden passion. 'You've been listening at doors—and behind trees—and down chimneys—or you couldn't have known it!'

'I haven't, indeed!' Alice said very gently. 'It's in a book.'

'Ah, well! They may write such things in a *book*,' Humpty Dumpty said in a calmer tone. 'That's what you call a History of England, that is. Now, take a good look at me! I'm one that has spoken to a King, *I* am: mayhap you'll never see such another: and to show you I'm not proud, you may shake hands with me!' And he grinned almost from ear to ear, as he leant forwards (and as nearly as possible fell off the wall in doing so) and offered Alice his hand. She watched him a little anxiously as she took it. 'If he smiled much more, the ends of his mouth might meet behind,' she thought: 'and then I don't know what would happen to his head! I'm afraid it would come off!'
'Yes, all his horses and all his men,' Humpty Dumpty went on. 'They'd pick me up again in a minute, *they* would! However, this conversation is going on a little too fast: let's go back to the last remark but one.'
'I'm afraid I can't quite remember it,' Alice said very politely.

'In that case we start fresh,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'and it's my turn to choose a subject—' ('He talks about it just as if it was a game!' thought Alice.) 'So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?'

Alice made a short calculation, and said 'Seven years and six months.'

'Wrong!' Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly. 'You never said a word like it!'

'I though you meant "How old *are* you?"' Alice explained.
'If I'd meant that, I'd have said it,' said Humpty Dumpty.

Alice didn't want to begin another argument, so she said nothing.

'Seven years and six months!' Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. 'An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said "Leave off at seven"—but it's too late now.'
'I never ask advice about growing,' Alice said indignantly.

'Too proud?' the other inquired.

Alice felt even more indignant at this suggestion. 'I mean,' she said, 'that one can't help growing older.'

'*One* can't, perhaps,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'but *two* can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven.'
'What a beautiful belt you've got on!' Alice suddenly remarked.

(They had had quite enough of the subject of age, she thought: and if they really were to take turns in choosing subjects, it was her turn now.) 'At least,' she corrected herself on second

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thoughts, ‘a beautiful cravat, I should have said—no, a belt, I mean—I beg your pardon!’ she added in dismay, for Humpty Dumpty looked thoroughly offended, and she began to wish she hadn’t chosen that subject. ‘If I only knew,’ she thought to herself, ‘which was neck and which was waist!’

Evidently Humpty Dumpty was very angry, though he said nothing for a minute or two. When he *did* speak again, it was in a deep growl.
‘It is a—*most*—*provoking*—thing,’ he said at last, ‘when a person doesn’t know a cravat from a belt!’
‘I know it’s very ignorant of me,’ Alice said, in so humble a tone that Humpty Dumpty relented.

‘It’s a cravat, child, and a beautiful one, as you say. It’s a present from the White King and Queen. There now!’

‘Is it really?’ said Alice, quite pleased to find that she *had* chosen a good subject, after all.
‘They gave it me,’ Humpty Dumpty continued thoughtfully, as he crossed one knee over the other and clasped his hands round it, ‘they gave it me—for an un-birthday present.’

‘I beg your pardon?’ Alice said with a puzzled air.

‘I’m not offended,’ said Humpty Dumpty.

‘I mean, what *is* an un-birthday present?’
‘A present given when it isn’t your birthday, of course.’

Alice considered a little. ‘I like birthday presents best,’ she said at last.

‘You don’t know what you’re talking about!’ cried Humpty Dumpty. ‘How many days are there in a year?’

‘Three hundred and sixty-five,’ said Alice.

‘And how many birthdays have you?’

‘One.’

‘And if you take one from three hundred and sixty-five, what remains?’

‘Three hundred and sixty-four, of course.’

Humpty Dumpty looked doubtful. ‘I’d rather see that done on paper,’ he said.

Alice couldn’t help smiling as she took out her memorandum-book, and worked the sum for him:

$$\begin{array}{r} 365 \\ -\ \ 1 \\ \hline 364 \end{array}$$

Humpty Dumpty took the book, and looked at it carefully. ‘That seems to be done right—’ he began.

‘You’re holding it upside down!’ Alice interrupted.

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‘To be sure I was!’ Humpty Dumpty said gaily, as she turned it round for him. ‘I thought it looked a little queer. As I was saying, that *seems* to be done right—though I haven’t time to look it over thoroughly just now—and that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents—’
‘Certainly,’ said Alice.

‘And only *one* for birthday presents, you know. There’s glory for you!’
‘I don’t know what you mean by “glory,”’ Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. ‘Of course you don’t—till I tell you. I meant “there’s a nice knock-down argument for you!”’

‘But “glory” doesn’t mean “a nice knock-down argument,”’ Alice objected.

‘When *I* use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.’
‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.’
‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master—that’s all.’

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything, so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. ‘They’ve a temper, some of them—particularly verbs, they’re the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That’s what *I* say!’
‘Would you tell me, please,’ said Alice ‘what that means?’

‘Now you talk like a reasonable child,’ said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. ‘I meant by “impenetrability” that we’ve had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you’d mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don’t mean to stop here all the rest of your life.’

‘That’s a great deal to make one word mean,’ Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

‘When I make a word do a lot of work like that,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘I always pay it extra.’

‘Oh!’ said Alice. She was too much puzzled to make any other remark.

‘Ah, you should see ‘em come round me of a Saturday night,’ Humpty Dumpty went on, wagging his head gravely from side to side: ‘for to get their wages, you know.’

(Alice didn’t venture to ask what he paid them with; and so you see I can’t tell *you*.)
‘You seem very clever at explaining words, Sir,’ said Alice. ‘Would you kindly tell me the meaning of the poem called “Jabberwocky”?’

‘Let’s hear it,’ said Humpty Dumpty. ‘I can explain all the poems that were ever invented—and a good many that haven’t been invented just yet.’

This sounded very hopeful, so Alice repeated the first verse:

‘‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;

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All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.'

'That's enough to begin with,' Humpty Dumpty interrupted: 'there are plenty of hard words there. "*Brillig*" means four o'clock in the afternoon—the time when you begin *broiling* things for dinner.'

'That'll do very well,' said Alice: 'and "*slithy*"?'

'Well, "*slithy*" means "lithe and slimy." "Lithe" is the same as "active." You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word.'

'I see it now,' Alice remarked thoughtfully: 'and what are "*toves*"?'

'Well, "*toves*" are something like badgers—they're something like lizards—and they're something like corkscrews.'

'They must be very curious looking creatures.'

'They are that,' said Humpty Dumpty: 'also they make their nests under sun-dials—also they live on cheese.'

'And what's the "*gyre*" and to "*gimble*"?'

'To "*gyre*" is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To "*gimble*" is to make holes like a gimlet.'

'And "*the wabe*" is the grass-plot round a sun-dial, I suppose?' said Alice, surprised at her own ingenuity.

'Of course it is. It's called "*wabe*," you know, because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it—'

'And a long way beyond it on each side,' Alice added.

'Exactly so. Well, then, "*mimsy*" is "flimsy and miserable" (there's another portmanteau for you). And a "*borogove*" is a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round—something like a live mop.'

'And then "*mome raths*"?' said Alice. 'I'm afraid I'm giving you a great deal of trouble.'

'Well, a "*rath*" is a sort of green pig: but "*mome*" I'm not certain about. I think it's short for "from home"—meaning that they'd lost their way, you know.'

'And what does "*outgrabe*" mean?'

'Well, "*outgrabing*" is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle: however, you'll hear it done, maybe—down in the wood yonder—and when you've once heard it you'll be *quite* content. Who's been repeating all that hard stuff to you?'

'I read it in a book,' said Alice. 'But I had some poetry repeated to me, much easier than that, by—Tweedledee, I think it was.'

'As to poetry, you know,' said Humpty Dumpty, stretching out one of his great hands, '*I* can repeat poetry as well as other folk, if it comes to that—'

'Oh, it needn't come to that!' Alice hastily said, hoping to keep him from beginning.

'The piece I'm going to repeat,' he went on without noticing her remark, 'was written entirely for your amusement.'

Alice felt that in that case she really *ought* to listen to it, so she sat down, and said 'Thank you' rather sadly.

Chapter VI: Humpty Dumpty

‘In winter, when the fields are white,
I sing this song for your delight—

only I don’t sing it,’ he added, as an explanation.

‘I see you don’t,’ said Alice.

‘If you can *see* whether I’m singing or not, you’ve sharper eyes than most.’ Humpty Dumpty remarked severely. Alice was silent.

‘In spring, when woods are getting green,
I’ll try and tell you what I mean.’

‘Thank you very much,’ said Alice.

‘In summer, when the days are long,
Perhaps you’ll understand the song:
In autumn, when the leaves are brown,
Take pen and ink, and write it down.’

‘I will, if I can remember it so long,’ said Alice.

‘You needn’t go on making remarks like that,’ Humpty Dumpty said: ‘they’re not sensible, and they put me out.’

‘I sent a message to the fish:
I told them “This is what I wish.”
The little fishes of the sea,
They sent an answer back to me.
The little fishes’ answer was
“We cannot do it, Sir, because—“’

‘I’m afraid I don’t quite understand,’ said Alice.

‘It gets easier further on,’ Humpty Dumpty replied.

‘I sent to them again to say
“It will be better to obey.”
The fishes answered with a grin,
“Why, what a temper you are in!”
I told them once, I told them twice:
They would not listen to advice.
I took a kettle large and new,
Fit for the deed I had to do.
My heart went hop, my heart went thump;
I filled the kettle at the pump.
Then some one came to me and said,
“The little fishes are in bed.”
I said to him, I said it plain,
“Then you must wake them up again.”
I said it very loud and clear;
I went and shouted in his ear.’

Chapter VI: Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty raised his voice almost to a scream as he repeated this verse, and Alice thought with a shudder, 'I wouldn't have been the messenger for *anything*!'

'But he was very stiff and proud;
He said "You needn't shout so loud!"
And he was very proud and stiff;
He said "I'd go and wake them, if—"
I took a corkscrew from the shelf:
I went to wake them up myself.
And when I found the door was locked,
I pulled and pushed and kicked and knocked.
And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but—'

There was a long pause.

'Is that all?' Alice timidly asked.

'That's all,' said Humpty Dumpty. 'Good-bye.'

This was rather sudden, Alice thought: but, after such a *very* strong hint that she ought to be going, she felt that it would hardly be civil to stay. So she got up, and held out her hand. 'Good-bye, till we meet again!' she said as cheerfully as she could.
'I shouldn't know you again if we *did* meet,' Humpty Dumpty replied in a discontented tone, giving her one of his fingers to shake; 'you're so exactly like other people.'
'The face is what one goes by, generally,' Alice remarked in a thoughtful tone.

'That's just what I complain of,' said Humpty Dumpty. 'Your face is the same as everybody has—the two eyes, so—' (marking their places in the air with this thumb) 'nose in the middle, mouth under. It's always the same. Now if you had the two eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance—or the mouth at the top—that would be *some* help.'
'It wouldn't look nice,' Alice objected. But Humpty Dumpty only shut his eyes and said 'Wait till you've tried.'

Alice waited a minute to see if he would speak again, but as he never opened his eyes or took any further notice of her, she said 'Good-bye!' once more, and, getting no answer to this, she quietly walked away: but she couldn't help saying to herself as she went, 'Of all the unsatisfactory—' (she repeated this aloud, as it was a great comfort to have such a long word to say) 'of all the unsatisfactory people I *ever* met—' She never finished the sentence, for at this moment a heavy crash shook the forest from end to end.

Chapter VII: The Lion and the Unicorn

The next moment soldiers came running through the wood, at first in twos and threes, then ten or twenty together, and at last in such crowds that they seemed to fill the whole forest. Alice got behind a tree, for fear of being run over, and watched them go by.

She thought that in all her life she had never seen soldiers so uncertain on their feet: they were always tripping over something or other, and whenever one went down, several more always fell over him, so that the ground was soon covered with little heaps of men.

Then came the horses. Having four feet, these managed rather better than the foot-soldiers: but even *they* stumbled now and then; and it seemed to be a regular rule that, whenever a horse stumbled the rider fell off instantly. The confusion got worse every moment, and Alice was very glad to get out of the wood into an open place, where she found the White King seated on the ground, busily writing in his memorandum-book.
'I've sent them all!' the King cried in a tone of delight, on seeing Alice. 'Did you happen to meet any soldiers, my dear, as you came through the wood?'

'Yes, I did,' said Alice: 'several thousand, I should think.'

'Four thousand two hundred and seven, that's the exact number,' the King said, referring to his book. 'I couldn't send all the horses, you know, because two of them are wanted in the game. And I haven't sent the two Messengers, either. They're both gone to the town. Just look along the road, and tell me if you can see either of them.'

'I see nobody on the road,' said Alice.

'I only wish *I* had such eyes,' the King remarked in a fretful tone. 'To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance, too! Why, it's as much as *I* can do to see real people, by this light!'
All this was lost on Alice, who was still looking intently along the road, shading her eyes with one hand. 'I see somebody now!' she exclaimed at last. 'But he's coming very slowly—and what curious attitudes he goes into!' (For the messenger kept skipping up and down, and wriggling like an eel, as he came along, with his great hands spread out like fans on each side.)

'Not at all,' said the King. 'He's an Anglo-Saxon Messenger—and those are Anglo-Saxon attitudes. He only does them when he's happy. His name is Haigha.' (He pronounced it so as to rhyme with 'mayor.')

'I love my love with an H,' Alice couldn't help beginning, 'because he is Happy. I hate him with an H, because he is Hideous. I fed him with—with—with Ham-sandwiches and Hay. His name is Haigha, and he lives—'

'He lives on the Hill,' the King remarked simply, without the least idea that he was joining in the game, while Alice was still hesitating for the name of a town beginning with H. 'The other Messenger's called Hatta. I must have *two*, you know—to come and go. One to come, and one to go.'
'I beg your pardon?' said Alice.

'It isn't respectable to beg,' said the King.

Chapter VII: The Lion and the Unicorn

‘I only meant that I didn’t understand,’ said Alice. ‘Why one to come and one to go?’

‘Didn’t I tell you?’ the King repeated impatiently. ‘I must have *two*—to fetch and carry. One to fetch, and one to carry.’
At this moment the Messenger arrived: he was far too much out of breath to say a word, and could only wave his hands about, and make the most fearful faces at the poor King.

‘This young lady loves you with an H,’ the King said, introducing Alice in the hope of turning off the Messenger’s attention from himself—but it was no use—the Anglo-Saxon attitudes only got more extraordinary every moment, while the great eyes rolled wildly from side to side.

‘You alarm me!’ said the King. ‘I feel faint—Give me a ham sandwich!’

On which the Messenger, to Alice’s great amusement, opened a bag that hung round his neck, and handed a sandwich to the King, who devoured it greedily.

‘Another sandwich!’ said the King.

‘There’s nothing but hay left now,’ the Messenger said, peeping into the bag.

‘Hay, then,’ the King murmured in a faint whisper.

Alice was glad to see that it revived him a good deal. ‘There’s nothing like eating hay when you’re faint,’ he remarked to her, as he munched away.

‘I should think throwing cold water over you would be better,’ Alice suggested: ‘or some sal-volatile.’

‘I didn’t say there was nothing *better*,’ the King replied. ‘I said there was nothing *like* it.’ Which Alice did not venture to deny.
‘Who did you pass on the road?’ the King went on, holding out his hand to the Messenger for some more hay.

‘Nobody,’ said the Messenger.

‘Quite right,’ said the King: ‘this young lady saw him too. So of course Nobody walks slower than you.’

‘I do my best,’ the Messenger said in a sulky tone. ‘I’m sure nobody walks much faster than I do!’

‘He can’t do that,’ said the King, ‘or else he’d have been here first. However, now you’ve got your breath, you may tell us what’s happened in the town.’

‘I’ll whisper it,’ said the Messenger, putting his hands to his mouth in the shape of a trumpet, and stooping so as to get close to the King’s ear. Alice was sorry for this, as she wanted to hear the news too. However, instead of whispering, he simply shouted at the top of his voice ‘They’re at it again!’

Chapter VII: The Lion and the Unicorn

‘Do you call *that* a whisper?’ cried the poor King, jumping up and shaking himself. ‘If you do such a thing again, I’ll have you buttered! It went through and through my head like an earthquake!’
‘It would have to be a very tiny earthquake!’ thought Alice. ‘Who are at it again?’ she ventured to ask.

‘Why the Lion and the Unicorn, of course,’ said the King.

‘Fighting for the crown?’

‘Yes, to be sure,’ said the King: ‘and the best of the joke is, that it’s *my* crown all the while! Let’s run and see them.’ And they trotted off, Alice repeating to herself, as she ran, the words of the old song:—
‘The Lion and the Unicorn were fighting for the crown:
The Lion beat the Unicorn all round the town.
Some gave them white bread, some gave them brown;
Some gave them plum-cake and drummed them out of town.’
‘Does—the one—that wins—get the crown?’ she asked, as well as she could, for the run was putting her quite out of breath.

‘Dear me, no!’ said the King. ‘What an idea!’

‘Would you—be good enough,’ Alice panted out, after running a little further, ‘to stop a minute—just to get—one’s breath again?’

‘I’m *good* enough,’ the King said, ‘only I’m not strong enough. You see, a minute goes by so fearfully quick. You might as well try to stop a Bandersnatch!’
Alice had no more breath for talking, so they trotted on in silence, till they came in sight of a great crowd, in the middle of which the Lion and Unicorn were fighting. They were in such a cloud of dust, that at first Alice could not make out which was which: but she soon managed to distinguish the Unicorn by his horn.

They placed themselves close to where Hatta, the other messenger, was standing watching the fight, with a cup of tea in one hand and a piece of bread-and-butter in the other.

‘He’s only just out of prison, and he hadn’t finished his tea when he was sent in,’ Haigha whispered to Alice: ‘and they only give them oyster-shells in there—so you see he’s very hungry and thirsty. How are you, dear child?’ he went on, putting his arm affectionately round Hatta’s neck.

Hatta looked round and nodded, and went on with his bread and butter.

‘Were you happy in prison, dear child?’ said Haigha.

Hatta looked round once more, and this time a tear or two trickled down his cheek: but not a word would he say.

Chapter VII: The Lion and the Unicorn

‘Speak, can’t you!’ Haigha cried impatiently. But Hatta only munched away, and drank some more tea.

‘Speak, won’t you!’ cried the King. ‘How are they getting on with the fight?’

Hatta made a desperate effort, and swallowed a large piece of bread-and-butter. ‘They’re getting on very well,’ he said in a choking voice: ‘each of them has been down about eighty-seven times.’

‘Then I suppose they’ll soon bring the white bread and the brown?’ Alice ventured to remark.

‘It’s waiting for ‘em now,’ said Hatta: ‘this is a bit of it as I’m eating.’

There was a pause in the fight just then, and the Lion and the Unicorn sat down, panting, while the King called out ‘Ten minutes allowed for refreshments!’ Haigha and Hatta set to work at once, carrying rough trays of white and brown bread. Alice took a piece to taste, but it was *very* dry.
‘I don’t think they’ll fight any more to-day,’ the King said to Hatta: ‘go and order the drums to begin.’ And Hatta went bounding away like a grasshopper.

For a minute or two Alice stood silent, watching him. Suddenly she brightened up. ‘Look, look!’ she cried, pointing eagerly. ‘There’s the White Queen running across the country! She came flying out of the wood over yonder—How fast those Queens *can* run!’
‘There’s some enemy after her, no doubt,’ the King said, without even looking round. ‘That wood’s full of them.’

‘But aren’t you going to run and help her?’ Alice asked, very much surprised at his taking it so quietly.

‘No use, no use!’ said the King. ‘She runs so fearfully quick. You might as well try to catch a Bandersnatch! But I’ll make a memorandum about her, if you like—She’s a dear good creature,’ he repeated softly to himself, as he opened his memorandum-book. ‘Do you spell “creature” with a double “e”?’

At this moment the Unicorn sauntered by them, with his hands in his pockets. ‘I had the best of it this time?’ he said to the King, just glancing at him as he passed.

‘A little—a little,’ the King replied, rather nervously. ‘You shouldn’t have run him through with your horn, you know.’

‘It didn’t hurt him,’ the Unicorn said carelessly, and he was going on, when his eye happened to fall upon Alice: he turned round rather instantly, and stood for some time looking at her with an air of the deepest disgust.

‘What—is—this?’ he said at last.

Chapter VII: The Lion and the Unicorn

‘This is a child!’ Haigha replied eagerly, coming in front of Alice to introduce her, and spreading out both his hands towards her in an Anglo-Saxon attitude. ‘We only found it to-day. It’s as large as life, and twice as natural!’

‘I always thought they were fabulous monsters!’ said the Unicorn. ‘Is it alive?’

‘It can talk,’ said Haigha, solemnly.

The Unicorn looked dreamily at Alice, and said ‘Talk, child.’

Alice could not help her lips curling up into a smile as she began: ‘Do you know, I always thought Unicorns were fabulous monsters, too! I never saw one alive before!’

‘Well, now that we *have* seen each other,’ said the Unicorn, ‘if you’ll believe in me, I’ll believe in you. Is that a bargain?’
‘Yes, if you like,’ said Alice.

‘Come, fetch out the plum-cake, old man!’ the Unicorn went on, turning from her to the King. ‘None of your brown bread for me!’

‘Certainly—certainly!’ the King muttered, and beckoned to Haigha. ‘Open the bag!’ he whispered. ‘Quick! Not that one—that’s full of hay!’

Haigha took a large cake out of the bag, and gave it to Alice to hold, while he got out a dish and carving-knife. How they all came out of it Alice couldn’t guess. It was just like a conjuring-trick, she thought.

The Lion had joined them while this was going on: he looked very tired and sleepy, and his eyes were half shut. ‘What’s this!’ he said, blinking lazily at Alice, and speaking in a deep hollow tone that sounded like the tolling of a great bell.

‘Ah, what *is* it, now?’ the Unicorn cried eagerly. ‘You’ll never guess! *I* couldn’t.’
The Lion looked at Alice wearily. ‘Are you animal—vegetable—or mineral?’ he said, yawning at every other word.

‘It’s a fabulous monster!’ the Unicorn cried out, before Alice could reply.

‘Then hand round the plum-cake, Monster,’ the Lion said, lying down and putting his chin on his paws. ‘And sit down, both of you,’ (to the King and the Unicorn): ‘fair play with the cake, you know!’

The King was evidently very uncomfortable at having to sit down between the two great creatures; but there was no other place for him.

‘What a fight we might have for the crown, *now*!’ the Unicorn said, looking slyly up at the crown, which the poor King was nearly shaking off his head, he trembled so much.
‘I should win easy,’ said the Lion.

‘I’m not so sure of that,’ said the Unicorn.

Chapter VII: The Lion and the Unicorn

‘Why, I beat you all round the town, you chicken!’ the Lion replied angrily, half getting up as he spoke.

Here the King interrupted, to prevent the quarrel going on: he was very nervous, and his voice quite quivered. ‘All round the town?’ he said. ‘That’s a good long way. Did you go by the old bridge, or the market-place? You get the best view by the old bridge.’

‘I’m sure I don’t know,’ the Lion growled out as he lay down again. ‘There was too much dust to see anything. What a time the Monster is, cutting up that cake!’

Alice had seated herself on the bank of a little brook, with the great dish on her knees, and was sawing away diligently with the knife. ‘It’s very provoking!’ she said, in reply to the Lion (she was getting quite used to being called ‘the Monster’). ‘I’ve cut several slices already, but they always join on again!’

‘You don’t know how to manage Looking-glass cakes,’ the Unicorn remarked. ‘Hand it round first, and cut it afterwards.’

This sounded nonsense, but Alice very obediently got up, and carried the dish round, and the cake divided itself into three pieces as she did so. ‘*Now* cut it up,’ said the Lion, as she returned to her place with the empty dish.
‘I say, this isn’t fair!’ cried the Unicorn, as Alice sat with the knife in her hand, very much puzzled how to begin. ‘The Monster has given the Lion twice as much as me!’

‘She’s kept none for herself, anyhow,’ said the Lion. ‘Do you like plum-cake, Monster?’

But before Alice could answer him, the drums began.

Where the noise came from, she couldn’t make out: the air seemed full of it, and it rang through and through her head till she felt quite deafened. She started to her feet and sprang across the little brook in her terror,

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and had just time to see the Lion and the Unicorn rise to their feet, with angry looks at being interrupted in their feast, before she dropped to her knees, and put her hands over her ears, vainly trying to shut out the dreadful uproar.

‘If *that* doesn’t “drum them out of town,”’ she thought to herself, ‘nothing ever will!’

Chapter VIII: “It’s my own Invention”

After a while the noise seemed gradually to die away, till all was dead silence, and Alice lifted up her head in some alarm. There was no one to be seen, and her first thought was that she must have been dreaming about the Lion and the Unicorn and those queer Anglo-Saxon Messengers. However, there was the great dish still lying at her feet, on which she had tried to cut the plum-cake, ‘So I wasn’t dreaming, after all,’ she said to herself, ‘unless—unless we’re all part of the same dream. Only I do hope it’s *my* dream, and not the Red King’s! I don’t like belonging to another person’s dream,’ she went on in a rather complaining tone: ‘I’ve a great mind to go and wake him, and see what happens!’
At this moment her thoughts were interrupted by a loud shouting of ‘Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!’ and a Knight dressed in crimson armour came galloping down upon her, brandishing a great club. Just as he reached her, the horse stopped suddenly: ‘You’re my prisoner!’ the Knight cried, as he tumbled off his horse.

Startled as she was, Alice was more frightened for him than for herself at the moment, and watched him with some anxiety as he mounted again. As soon as he was comfortably in the saddle, he began once more ‘You’re my—’ but here another voice broke in ‘Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!’ and Alice looked round in some surprise for the new enemy.

This time it was a White Knight. He drew up at Alice’s side, and tumbled off his horse just as the Red Knight had done: then he got on again, and the two Knights sat and looked at each other for some time without speaking. Alice looked from one to the other in some bewilderment.

‘She’s *my* prisoner, you know!’ the Red Knight said at last.
‘Yes, but then *I* came and rescued her!’ the White Knight replied.
‘Well, we must fight for her, then,’ said the Red Knight, as he took up his helmet (which hung from the saddle, and was something the shape of a horse’s head), and put it on.

‘You will observe the Rules of Battle, of course?’ the White Knight remarked, putting on his helmet too.

‘I always do,’ said the Red Knight, and they began banging away at each other with such fury that Alice got behind a tree to be out of the way of the blows.

‘I wonder, now, what the Rules of Battle are,’ she said to herself, as she watched the fight, timidly peeping out from her hiding-place: ‘one Rule seems to be, that if one Knight hits the other, he knocks him off his horse, and if he misses, he tumbles off himself—and another Rule seems to be that they hold their clubs with their arms, as if they were Punch and Judy—What a noise they make when they tumble! Just like a whole set of fire-irons falling into the fender! And how quiet the horses are! They let them get on and off them just as if they were tables!’

Another Rule of Battle, that Alice had not noticed, seemed to be that they always fell on their heads, and the battle ended with their both falling off in this way, side by side: when they got up again, they shook hands, and then the Red Knight mounted and galloped off.

‘It was a glorious victory, wasn’t it?’ said the White Knight, as he came up panting.

Chapter VIII: “It’s my own Invention”

‘I don’t know,’ Alice said doubtfully. ‘I don’t want to be anybody’s prisoner. I want to be a Queen.’

‘So you will, when you’ve crossed the next brook,’ said the White Knight. ‘I’ll see you safe to the end of the wood—and then I must go back, you know. That’s the end of my move.’

‘Thank you very much,’ said Alice. ‘May I help you off with your helmet?’ It was evidently more than he could manage by himself; however, she managed to shake him out of it at last.

‘Now one can breathe more easily,’ said the Knight, putting back his shaggy hair with both hands, and turning his gentle face and large mild eyes to Alice. She thought she had never seen such a strange-looking soldier in all her life.

He was dressed in tin armour, which seemed to fit him very badly, and he had a queer-shaped little deal box fastened across his shoulder, upside-down, and with the lid hanging open. Alice looked at it with great curiosity.

‘I see you’re admiring my little box.’ the Knight said in a friendly tone. ‘It’s my own invention—to keep clothes and sandwiches in. You see I carry it upside-down, so that the rain can’t get in.’

‘But the things can get *out*,’ Alice gently remarked. ‘Do you know the lid’s open?’
‘I didn’t know it,’ the Knight said, a shade of vexation passing over his face. ‘Then all the things must have fallen out! And the box is no use without them.’ He unfastened it as he spoke, and was just going to throw it into the bushes, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he hung it carefully on a tree. ‘Can you guess why I did that?’ he said to Alice.

Alice shook her head.

‘In hopes some bees may make a nest in it—then I should get the honey.’

‘But you’ve got a bee-hive—or something like one—fastened to the saddle,’ said Alice.

‘Yes, it’s a very good bee-hive,’ the Knight said in a discontented tone, ‘one of the best kind. But not a single bee has come near it yet. And the other thing is a mouse-trap. I suppose the mice keep the bees out—or the bees keep the mice out, I don’t know which.’

‘I was wondering what the mouse-trap was for,’ said Alice. ‘It isn’t very likely there would be any mice on the horse’s back.’

‘Not very likely, perhaps,’ said the Knight: ‘but if they *do* come, I don’t choose to have them running all about.’
‘You see,’ he went on after a pause, ‘it’s as well to be provided for *everything*. That’s the reason the horse has all those anklets round his feet.’
‘But what are they for?’ Alice asked in a tone of great curiosity.

‘To guard against the bites of sharks,’ the Knight replied. ‘It’s an invention of my own. And now help me on. I’ll go with you to the end of the wood—What’s the dish for?’

Chapter VIII: “It’s my own Invention”

‘It’s meant for plum-cake,’ said Alice.

‘We’d better take it with us,’ the Knight said. ‘It’ll come in handy if we find any plum-cake. Help me to get it into this bag.’

This took a very long time to manage, though Alice held the bag open very carefully, because the Knight was so *very* awkward in putting in the dish: the first two or three times that he tried he fell in himself instead. ‘It’s rather a tight fit, you see,’ he said, as they got it in a last; ‘There are so many candlesticks in the bag.’ And he hung it to the saddle, which was already loaded with bunches of carrots, and fire-irons, and many other things.
‘I hope you’ve got your hair well fastened on?’ he continued, as they set off.

‘Only in the usual way,’ Alice said, smiling.

‘That’s hardly enough,’ he said, anxiously. ‘You see the wind is so *very* strong here. It’s as strong as soup.’
‘Have you invented a plan for keeping the hair from being blown off?’ Alice enquired.

‘Not yet,’ said the Knight. ‘But I’ve got a plan for keeping it from *falling* off.’
‘I should like to hear it, very much.’

‘First you take an upright stick,’ said the Knight. ‘Then you make your hair creep up it, like a fruit-tree. Now the reason hair falls off is because it hangs *down*—things never fall *upwards*, you know. It’s a plan of my own invention. You may try it if you like.’
It didn’t sound a comfortable plan, Alice thought, and for a few minutes she walked on in silence, puzzling over the idea, and every now and then stopping to help the poor Knight, who certainly was *not* a good rider.
Whenever the horse stopped (which it did very often), he fell off in front; and whenever it went on again (which it generally did rather suddenly), he fell off behind. Otherwise he kept on pretty well, except that he had a habit of now and then falling off sideways; and as he generally did this on the side on which Alice was walking, she soon found that it was the best plan not to walk *quite* close to the horse.
‘I’m afraid you’ve not had much practice in riding,’ she ventured to say, as she was helping him up from his fifth tumble.

The Knight looked very much surprised, and a little offended at the remark. ‘What makes you say that?’ he asked, as he scrambled back into the saddle, keeping hold of Alice’s hair with one hand, to save himself from falling over on the other side.

‘Because people don’t fall off quite so often, when they’ve had much practice.’

‘I’ve had plenty of practice,’ the Knight said very gravely: ‘plenty of practice!’

Alice could think of nothing better to say than ‘Indeed?’ but she said it as heartily as she could. They went on a little way in silence after this, the Knight with his eyes shut, muttering to himself, and Alice watching anxiously for the next tumble.

Chapter VIII: “It’s my own Invention”

‘The great art of riding,’ the Knight suddenly began in a loud voice, waving his right arm as he spoke, ‘is to keep—’ Here the sentence ended as suddenly as it had begun, as the Knight fell heavily on the top of his head exactly in the path where Alice was walking. She was quite frightened this time, and said in an anxious tone, as she picked him up, ‘I hope no bones are broken?’

‘None to speak of,’ the Knight said, as if he didn’t mind breaking two or three of them. ‘The great art of riding, as I was saying, is—to keep your balance properly. Like this, you know—’

He let go the bridle, and stretched out both his arms to show Alice what he meant, and this time he fell flat on his back, right under the horse’s feet.

‘Plenty of practice!’ he went on repeating, all the time that Alice was getting him on his feet again. ‘Plenty of practice!’

‘It’s too ridiculous!’ cried Alice, losing all her patience this time. ‘You ought to have a wooden horse on wheels, that you ought!’

‘Does that kind go smoothly?’ the Knight asked in a tone of great interest, clasping his arms round the horse’s neck as he spoke, just in time to save himself from tumbling off again.

‘Much more smoothly than a live horse,’ Alice said, with a little scream of laughter, in spite of all she could do to prevent it.

‘I’ll get one,’ the Knight said thoughtfully to himself. ‘One or two—several.’

There was a short silence after this, and then the Knight went on again. ‘I’m a great hand at inventing things. Now, I daresay you noticed, that last time you picked me up, that I was looking rather thoughtful?’

‘You *were* a little grave,’ said Alice.
‘Well, just then I was inventing a new way of getting over a gate—would you like to hear it?’

‘Very much indeed,’ Alice said politely.

‘I’ll tell you how I came to think of it,’ said the Knight. ‘You see, I said to myself, “The only difficulty is with the feet: the *head* is high enough already.” Now, first I put my head on the top of the gate—then I stand on my head—then the feet are high enough, you see—then I’m over, you see.’
‘Yes, I suppose you’d be over when that was done,’ Alice said thoughtfully: ‘but don’t you think it would be rather hard?’

‘I haven’t tried it yet,’ the Knight said, gravely: ‘so I can’t tell for certain—but I’m afraid it *would* be a little hard.’
He looked so vexed at the idea, that Alice changed the subject hastily. ‘What a curious helmet you’ve got!’ she said cheerfully. ‘Is that your invention too?’

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The Knight looked down proudly at his helmet, which hung from the saddle. ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘but I’ve invented a better one than that—like a sugar loaf. When I used to wear it, if I fell off the horse, it always touched the ground directly. So I had a *very* little way to fall, you see—But there *was* the danger of falling *into* it, to be sure. That happened to me once—and the worst of it was, before I could get out again, the other White Knight came and put it on. He thought it was his own helmet.’
The knight looked so solemn about it that Alice did not dare to laugh. ‘I’m afraid you must have hurt him,’ she said in a trembling voice, ‘being on the top of his head.’

‘I had to kick him, of course,’ the Knight said, very seriously. ‘And then he took the helmet off again—but it took hours and hours to get me out. I was as fast as—as lightning, you know.’

‘But that’s a different kind of fastness,’ Alice objected.

The Knight shook his head. ‘It was all kinds of fastness with me, I can assure you!’ he said. He raised his hands in some excitement as he said this, and instantly rolled out of the saddle, and fell headlong into a deep ditch.

Alice ran to the side of the ditch to look for him. She was rather startled by the fall, as for some time he had kept on very well, and she was afraid that he really *was* hurt this time. However, though she could see nothing but the soles of his feet, she was much relieved to hear that he was talking on in his usual tone. ‘All kinds of fastness,’ he repeated: ‘but it was careless of him to put another man’s helmet on—with the man in it, too.’
‘How *can* you go on talking so quietly, head downwards?’ Alice asked, as she dragged him out by the feet, and laid him in a heap on the bank.
The Knight looked surprised at the question. ‘What does it matter where my body happens to be?’ he said. ‘My mind goes on working all the same. In fact, the more head downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things.’

‘Now the cleverest thing of the sort that I ever did,’ he went on after a pause, ‘was inventing a new pudding during the meat-course.’

‘In time to have it cooked for the next course?’ said Alice. ‘Well, not the *next* course,’ the Knight said in a slow thoughtful tone: ‘no, certainly not the next *course*.’
‘Then it would have to be the next day. I suppose you wouldn’t have two pudding-courses in one dinner?’

‘Well, not the *next* day,’ the Knight repeated as before: ‘not the next *day*. In fact,’ he went on, holding his head down, and his voice getting lower and lower, ‘I don’t believe that pudding ever *was* cooked! In fact, I don’t believe that pudding ever *will* be cooked! And yet it was a very clever pudding to invent.’
‘What did you mean it to be made of?’ Alice asked, hoping to cheer him up, for the poor Knight seemed quite low-spirited about it.

‘It began with blotting paper,’ the Knight answered with a groan.

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‘That wouldn’t be very nice, I’m afraid—’

‘Not very nice *alone*,’ he interrupted, quite eagerly: ‘but you’ve no idea what a difference it makes mixing it with other things—such as gunpowder and sealing-wax. And here I must leave you.’ They had just come to the end of the wood.
Alice could only look puzzled: she was thinking of the pudding.

‘You are sad,’ the Knight said in an anxious tone: ‘let me sing you a song to comfort you.’

‘Is it very long?’ Alice asked, for she had heard a good deal of poetry that day.

‘It’s long,’ said the Knight, ‘but very, *very* beautiful. Everybody that hears me sing it—either it brings the *tears* into their eyes, or else—’
‘Or else what?’ said Alice, for the Knight had made a sudden pause.

‘Or else it doesn’t, you know. The name of the song is called “*Haddocks’ Eyes*.”’
‘Oh, that’s the name of the song, is it?’ Alice said, trying to feel interested.

‘No, you don’t understand,’ the Knight said, looking a little vexed. ‘That’s what the name is *called*. The name really *is* “*The Aged Aged Man*.”’
‘Then I ought to have said “That’s what the *song* is called”?’ Alice corrected herself.
‘No, you oughtn’t: that’s quite another thing! The *song* is called “*Ways and Means*”: but that’s only what it’s *called*, you know!’
‘Well, what *is* the song, then?’ said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.
‘I was coming to that,’ the Knight said. ‘The song really *is* “*A-sitting On A Gate*”: and the tune’s my own invention.’
So saying, he stopped his horse and let the reins fall on its neck: then, slowly beating time with one hand, and with a faint smile lighting up his gentle foolish face, as if he enjoyed the music of his song, he began.

Of all the strange things that Alice saw in her journey Through The Looking-Glass, this was the one that she always remembered most clearly. Years afterwards she could bring the whole scene back again, as if it had been only yesterday—the mild blue eyes and kindly smile of the Knight—the setting sun gleaming through his hair, and shining on his armour in a blaze of light that quite dazzled her—the horse quietly moving about, with the reins hanging loose on his neck, cropping the grass at her feet—and the black shadows of the forest behind—all this she took in like a picture, as, with one hand shading her eyes, she leant against a tree, watching the strange pair, and listening, in a half dream, to the melancholy music of the song.

‘But the tune *isn’t* his own invention,’ she said to herself: ‘it’s “*I give thee all, I can no more*.”’
She stood and listened very attentively, but no tears came into her eyes.

‘I’ll tell thee everything I can;
There’s little to relate.
I saw an aged aged man,
A-sitting on a gate.
“Who are you, aged man?” I said,

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“and how is it you live?”
And his answer trickled through my head
Like water through a sieve.
He said “I look for butterflies
That sleep among the wheat:
I make them into mutton-pies,
And sell them in the street.
I sell them unto men,” he said,
“Who sail on stormy seas;
And that’s the way I get my bread—
A trifle, if you please.”
But I was thinking of a plan
To dye one’s whiskers green,
And always use so large a fan
That they could not be seen.
So, having no reply to give
To what the old man said,
I cried, “Come, tell me how you live!”
And thumped him on the head.
His accents mild took up the tale:
He said “I go my ways,
And when I find a mountain-rill,
I set it in a blaze;
And thence they make a stuff they call
Rolands’ Macassar Oil—
Yet twopence-halfpenny is all
They give me for my toil.”
But I was thinking of a way
To feed oneself on batter,
And so go on from day to day
Getting a little fatter.
I shook him well from side to side,
Until his face was blue:
“Come, tell me how you live,” I cried,
“And what it is you do!”
He said “I hunt for haddocks’ eyes
Among the heather bright,
And work them into waistcoat-buttons
In the silent night.
And these I do not sell for gold
Or coin of silvery shine

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But for a copper halfpenny,
And that will purchase nine.
“I sometimes dig for buttered rolls,
Or set limed twigs for crabs;
I sometimes search the grassy knolls
For wheels of Hansom-cabs.
And that’s the way” (he gave a wink)
“By which I get my wealth—
And very gladly will I drink
Your Honour’s noble health.”
I heard him then, for I had just
Completed my design
To keep the Menai bridge from rust
By boiling it in wine.
I thanked him much for telling me
The way he got his wealth,
But chiefly for his wish that he
Might drink my noble health.
And now, if e’er by chance I put
My fingers into glue
Or madly squeeze a right-hand foot
Into a left-hand shoe,
Or if I drop upon my toe
A very heavy weight,
I weep, for it reminds me so,
Of that old man I used to know—
Whose look was mild, whose speech was slow,
Whose hair was whiter than the snow,
Whose face was very like a crow,
With eyes, like cinders, all aglow,
Who seemed distracted with his woe,
Who rocked his body to and fro,
And muttered mumblingly and low,
As if his mouth were full of dough,
Who snorted like a buffalo—
That summer evening, long ago,
A-sitting on a gate.’

As the Knight sang the last words of the ballad, he gathered up the reins, and turned his horse’s head along the road by which they had come. ‘You’ve only a few yards to go,’ he said, ‘down the hill and over that little brook, and then you’ll be a Queen—But you’ll stay and see me off first?’ he added as Alice turned with an eager look in the direction to which he pointed. ‘I shan’t

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be long. You’ll wait and wave your handkerchief when I get to that turn in the road? I think it’ll encourage me, you see.’

‘Of course I’ll wait,’ said Alice: ‘and thank you very much for coming so far—and for the song—I liked it very much.’

‘I hope so,’ the Knight said doubtfully: ‘but you didn’t cry so much as I thought you would.’

So they shook hands, and then the Knight rode slowly away into the forest. ‘It won’t take long to see him *off*, I expect,’ Alice said to herself, as she stood watching him. ‘There he goes! Right on his head as usual! However, he gets on again pretty easily—that comes of having so many things hung round the horse—’ So she went on talking to herself, as she watched the horse walking leisurely along the road, and the Knight tumbling off, first on one side and then on the other. After the fourth or fifth tumble he reached the turn, and then she waved her handkerchief to him, and waited till he was out of sight.

‘I hope it encouraged him,’ she said, as she turned to run down the hill: ‘and now for the last brook, and to be a Queen! How grand it sounds!’ A very few steps brought her to the edge of the brook. ‘The Eighth Square at last!’ she cried as she bounded across,

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and threw herself down to rest on a lawn as soft as moss, with little flower-beds dotted about it here and there. ‘Oh, how glad I am to get here! And what *is* this on my head?’ she exclaimed in a tone of dismay, as she put her hands up to something very heavy, and fitted tight all round her head.

‘But how *can* it have got there without my knowing it?’ she said to herself, as she lifted it off, and set it on her lap to make out what it could possibly be.

It was a golden crown.