

Red Queen

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

THE RED QUEEN

(† 34, 35, and 36. * 12)

At rise, ALICE is seen still running, but now she is facing left. She slows down wearily and comes to a stop. As LIGHTS come up, she finds herself in a land that is marked out in squares, like a huge chessboard, with a large tree at the right. Presently, from the left, with a thump, thump of footsteps, the RED QUEEN enters and comes face to face with ALICE.

RED QUEEN

Where do you come from and where are you going?
Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers.

ALICE (*attending to all these directions as well as she can*)

You see I've lost my way.

RED QUEEN

I don't know what you mean by *your* way, all the ways about here belong to *me*—but why did you come out here at all? Curtsey while you're thinking what to say. It saves time.

ALICE (*aside*)

I'll try it when I go home, the next time I'm a little late for dinner.

RED QUEEN (*looking at 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 only wanted to see what the garden was like, Your Majesty ——

RED QUEEN (*patting ALICE on the head which she doesn't like at all*)

That's right, though when you say "garden"—*I've* seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness.

ALICE (*going right on*)

—and I thought I'd try and find my way to the top of that hill.

RED QUEEN

When you you say "hill"—*I* could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley.

ALICE

No, I shouldn't, a hill *can't* be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense ——

RED QUEEN

You may call it "nonsense" if you like, but *I've* heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary! (*ALICE curtsies again as she is afraid by the QUEEN's tone that she is a little offended.*)