

For the Love of Alice

By Joseph Parish



One of my most cherished books as a young child was *Alice in Wonderland*, and even today, it is a book which I completely enjoy and get engrossed in reading. As a young child, I could almost guarantee that at Christmas time, I would have one of the classic children's books wrapped neatly with a colorful bow and sitting under the holiday tree. My present might have been *Treasure Island*, *Swiss Family Robinson* or of course *Alice in Wonderland*. Although I often view Lewis Carroll as some sort of pervert, he did write a great tale. In my opinion, he was a bit too familiar and too close to his niece, Alice Pleasance Liddell. There can be no doubt in my mind that he must have been high on drugs while creating this excellent story. For all we know he may have introduced Alice to such mind-boggling hallucinogens as well.

I cannot even begin to imagine the number of movies, plays and books which have emerged, based upon this 1864 manuscript. I liked the book so much that when Johnny Deep appeared as the Mad Hatter in the 3-D version of the film, I had to see it personally. I was so impressed with the quality and the acting performance within the movie that I had to rush out and purchase a 3-D television and the home version of the 3-D CD. I was not disappointed in any way. Should another version appear on the big screen, you can bet, I shall not miss seeing it.

I found that the methods of conversations which took place in the book to be especially captivating. Here we encounter a book fit for adults to read and enjoy, although

it contains a host of fully clothed and talking animals. Even the huge, overgrown, White Rabbit could read and above all tell time. Think back to when the White Rabbit leaped down into the rabbit hole and Alice proceeded to follow him. Once inside the hole, Alice sees and hears the giant rabbit comment:

"Oh, my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting."

This is verification that, as I said this big bundle of fur, could not only talk, but also read a watch, otherwise he could not know he was late. I clearly recall the Walt Disney film where the White Rabbit sings a song which goes as follows.

"I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date!"

On occasion I find myself humorously repeating those exact phrases to my adult children when they visit my home. Many topics within the book permit the conversations to mold the images which we envision before us, such as when Alice realizes she is her normal size while attending court with the Queen of Hearts. Alice casually remarks,

"You're nothing but a pack of cards!"

I felt this was an amusing comment when I was younger and it still manages to produce a chuckle or two from me today. To me injecting this comment in the presence of the Queen and considering she was in fact a living deck of cards not only made me laugh but instilled an appreciation of Carroll's humor.

Although, throughout the book we observe that the Queen of Hearts continuously demands for her subjects to lose their heads, I do not believe, however, that anyone really did. This was an excellent move on the part of the writer to instill fear in children, but yet, not push it to the extreme. He would initially shock his young readers with the Queen's continual commands and then sugarcoat her comments by merely not following through. To Lewis I say, "Well done, Sir."

One of the more plausible accounts I discovered within the book exposes just how Lewis felt about writing, as modern writers likely feel the same way. While the King of Hearts was attending the court hearing he requested that the White Rabbit read some verses written by a condemned prisoner. The rabbit did not know where he should begin to read and appeared to be puzzled. The King quickly replies,

"Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop."

In this short statement, Lewis took writing logic to the very edge of effective reasoning when he proposed this impressive statement. If one reflects upon this thought, this is faithfully what authors are rumored to accomplish when they write. They start on one page and continue on until they reach the end, and then it is complete.

I never tire of reading this book and only wish I could unearth an original version to place in my collection which I could afford. Who knows, perhaps in time I will locate a hidden treasure from Carroll and have my wish granted? Unfortunately, at this time I do

not have \$49,000 to invest in an original first edition. I will leave you with one last thought from the Alice and Wonderland book. It was a remark made by the Cheshire cat as he grinned at Alice,

"We're all mad here."