

WOTCHA! GOTCHA!

A pantomime in three acts

By

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First performed in 2013 at the

Bergdorff Center for the Performing Arts

Maplewood, New Jersey

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CAST

(In order of appearance)

Wiggins (Principal 'boy', played by a girl)

Mrs Hudson (Dame)

Socko (boy, street urchin)

PC Easy (Policeman)

Spring heeled Jack

Alice Liddell (female)

Mad Hat (female)

Moriarty (female)

Dodgson (male)

Wiggler (boy, street urchin)

Dodger (boy, street urchin, rival gang)

Horatio (the pantomime horse)

Bertie (cabby)

Dr James Watson

Shamrock Holmes

Harriet March

Prince Leopold

Oliver (boy, urchin, rival gang)

Fader (girl, urchin, rival gang)

Shilly (street urchin)

MC

Gorblimey Bruvver 1

Gorblimey Bruvver 2

Gorblimey Bruvver 3

Melody (female)

Zingo (male)

Queen Victoria

ACT I

Scene 1

Generic Street Scene.

[enter Wiggins and Mrs Hudson]

WIGGINS

[Wiggins is the "Principle Boy", i.e. is played by a girl]

I'm 'arry Wiggins. Wotcha, everybody!

[waving cheerily]

MRS HUDSON

[Mrs H is the "Dame", i.e. played by an overdressed man with too much makeup]

Hello, Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls. This is my nephew, Harry Wiggins, and that's his rather uncouth way of saying "How d'ye do. As this is a "Panto" we would of course like you to reply.

WIGGINS

Aunt Mary?

MRS H

What is it, Harry?

WIGGINS

I don't think they all know what a "Panto" is, auntie.

MRS H

Don't know what... well, what are they doing in this theater then?

WIGGINS

Well, right now they're a-waitin' for you to tell 'em what a "Panto" is, auntie.

MRS H

Me?

WIGGINS

Yes, you. Aren't you, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls?

AUDIENCE

[hopefully]

Yes!

MRS H

What about that one there?

WIGGINS

What *about* that one there?

MRS H

Which is it? Lady, gentleman, boy, girl, what?

WIGGINS

[taking out Holmes-type magnifying glass]

Hmmm.... yes, definitely the last one you said.

MRS H

a girl?

WIGGINS

No, a "what"...

[puts magnifying glass away]

So go ahead and tell everyone what a "Panto" is. You'll explain it better than wot I could. You're a very educated lady, Mrs Hudson. Very well-informed. Everybody trusts you.

MRS H

[preening herself]

Oh well, in that case, I'd better explain. Listen carefully, everyone. A good old pantomime is great fun, and it often contains beautiful women like this one does...

WIGGINS

...and a dashing young man too.

[enter Socko]

SOCKO

And if you believe that's a beautiful woman and a dashing young man, I have a Nigerian prince outside who only needs your banking details and a signed blank check to help you inherit a fortune.

[exit]

MRS H

Pay no mind. It's all a part of the magic of Panto. Anyway, the main point is this: you all have to join in. Lots. Cheer the good guys, Boo the bad guys, sing along when you're asked to, and all things of that ilk. And above all..

WIGGINS

When someone says "Wotcha!" You ALL shout "Wotcha!"

MRS H

Or if you're a little more refined you can say "How do you do?"

WIGGINS

Let's try that: "Wotcha!"

[enter Socko. He holds up a sign saying "Wotcha!"]

AUDIENCE

Wotcha!

[Mrs H is waving everybody to join in while herself shouting "How do you do?"]

[This bit is repeated with encouragement from Wiggins, Socko and Mrs H until the audience is being really loud]

[enter PC Easy, unseen by Wiggins. He is about to "nab" Wiggins, but stops to say...]

PC EASY

And if anyone says "Gotcha!" You all have to shout out...

[Wiggler holds up a sign saying "Gotcha!"]

AUDIENCE

Gotcha!

[PC Easy tries to nab Wiggins, but Wiggins slips away, forewarned]

PC EASY

Gotcha!

[Wiggler holds up a sign saying "Gotcha!"]

AUDIENCE

Gotcha!

WIGGINS

[chanting]

Oh no you ain't!

[exit Wiggins]

PC EASY

Curses, foiled again!

MRS H

[in a loud "aside" to the audience]

This the local copper, PC Ernest Constable, or as we often call him, PC Easy - E.C., get it?

PC EASY

Evening, all.

MRS H

I have a confession to make: PC Easy here doesn't know that Harry is my nephew. And there have been times when he wanted to talk to him quite urgently. You won't tell him Harry's my nephew, will you?

AUDIENCE

No!

MRS H

Thank you. I can see you're going to be a wonderful audience. You see, the thing is, he's not always been the best-behaved young man, and I'm sure that the policeman has one or two things he'd care to discuss with young Harry. But he's a good lad at heart, and nowadays he's acting very responsibly indeed. He works with Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the Consulting Detective. Harry Wiggins is in fact the head of the Baker Street Irregulars, Mr. Holmes's young helpers.

[turns to PC Easy]

PC Easy, the little rascalion's got clean away again! Why don't you come and have a wee dram in my kitchen?

PC EASY

Why, I'd be much obliged, Ma'am.

[exit PC Easy and Mrs H]

[Socko strides forward to speak, but retreats when Mrs H comes back]

[re-enter Mrs H]

MRS H

Well, I hope you've all gotten an idea what a Very British Pantomime is all about. If you haven't, my friends, you'll just have to try to pick it up as we go long. Enjoy yourselves!

[exit]

[Socko strides forward to speak, but retreats when Mrs H comes back]

[Mrs H re-enters again]

I'll tell you what: ignore everything else we've all said about Panto. Just remember that last bit: "Enjoy yourselves"! WE most definitely shall.

[exit again]

[Socko strides forward, says nothing but does not retreat when Mrs H comes back]

[Mrs H re-enters once more]

MRS H

Oh yes and remember...

SOCKO

Yes?

MRS H

Watch out for Spring-Heeled Jack!

SOCKO

Who's Spring-Heeled Jack?

[sound effect BOING! BOING! BOING!]

JACK

ha ha ha ha ha!

[Spring-Heeled Jack appears briefly at back of stage, bouncing]

[exeunt]

Scene 2

[On the left of the stage, Alice Liddell is reading a book in her father's library and talking to her kitten, Dinah. In the center of the stage, edge onto the audience, is a mirror. On the right of the mirror is Mad Hat (a stangely-dressed woman) sitting in her steampunkish lounge (which later turns out to be aboard the dirigible "Queen of Hearts"). Mad Hat is fiddling with a device with lots of dials, meters, sliding knobs, etc. Mad Hat is somewhat aware of Alice,(and increasingly so as the scene goes on), but Alice is not aware of Mad Hat.]

ALICE

This is a very tedious book indeed, Dinah!

[she holds kitten up]

What's that Dinah? Show you some pictures? I'm afraid I can't. Why? Because there aren't any! It's one of Professor Charles' books, all about mathematics. There's lots and lots of maths and some words which seem to be entirely about the maths, but nothing happens and nobody says anything interesting. In fact there aren't any anybodies in the book *to* say anything.

[enter Professor Dodgson on Alice's side, unseen. He listens.]

MAD HAT

Get in here, Moriarty! I think I'm getting something again!

[all the while Mad Hat does things with the device there are science-fictiony noises]

ALICE

Boring, boring, boring!

[she stamps her foot]

I know what I'll do! I'll make it more interesting! I'll draw some pictures myself! I'll put little people all around the edge and I'll have them saying interesting things! What's that Dinah? Yes, it is a capital idea, isn't it? Sometimes I'm so brilliantly clever I startle myself.

[she picks up a pencil.]

[enter Professor Moriarty (a sinister-looking woman) on Mad Hat's side]

MORIARTY

What is it now, Mad Hat? I'm very busy you know.

MAD HAT

Busy doing what?

MORIARTY

Busy being an enormous amount more intelligent than you are.

MAD HAT

That's not what I pay you for, Professor.

MORIARTY

It rather is, you know. All this is me being clever.

[gestures]

Airships. Mirrors that let you see other worlds. Giant steam-driven mechanical men. The hat with the telescope and teapot in it. All me, being clever. That IS what you pay me for.

MAD HAT

Point taken, Professor, Point taken. What are you working on at the moment?

MORIARTY

[becoming enthusiastic]

My masterpiece. My piece de resistance. My magnum opus.

MAD HAT

Well, that's three languages. What is it in Swahili?

MORIARTY

"Kito"

MAD HAT

Basque?

MORIARTY

"Maisulan"

MAD HAT

How many languages do you speak, Professor Moriarty?

MORIARTY

Including dead languages, dialects, and patois?

MAD HAT

Yes, yes.

MORIARTY

All of them.

[as she is talking, Prof M has worked out what Mad Hat wants, she is adjusting the controls. Then she kicks the machine]

[There is a sudden mystic sound effect"Whumm-ee-oo-ow"]

ALICE

Now then, Dinah, let's see just how interesting we can make this book...

DODGSON

Can I persuade you otherwise, Miss Alice? It was my gift to your father. I rather think he might take offense if he were to find any untoward... additions.

MAD HAT

That's it! That's it! I can see them again now! and hear them!

[Mad Hat is now watching the mirror as if it were a TV screen]

MORIARTY

There were just a few delicate last-minute adjustments to make...

MAD HAT

Delicate adjustments? You kicked it!

MORIARTY

I never did!

MAD HAT

Oh yes you did!

[enter Wiggler]

WRIGGLER

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, listen! I'm not really in this bit, and I'll deny all knowledge of it if you ask me later, but this is another bit where you join in.

[he conducts the audience during the obligatory passage]

MORIARTY

Oh no I didn't!

MAD HAT/AUDIENCE/WRIGGLER

Oh yes you did!

MORIARTY

Oh no I didn't!

MAD HAT/AUDIENCE/WRIGGLER

Oh yes you did!

MORIARTY

Oh no I didn't!

[and so forth for a while]

MAD HAT

Oh no you didn't!

MORIARTY

Oh yes I did! Oops!

MAD HAT

Thank you Mr Wiggler. Was there anything else?

WRIGGLER

No, mate, I'm not even here am I?

MORIARTY

[recovering herself]

Quite right, young man, we had forgotten that momentarily. On your way now. Do I encounter you later?

WRIGGLER

Dunno ma'am. I'm still reading the script.

[waves script]

MAD HAT

Well, you'd better get on with it then - I don't want you fluffing your lines later on.

[she gestures.]

[exit Wiggler].

ALICE

[giggling]

Charlie! Er, I mean, Professor Dodgson. I'm terribly sorry, I don't know what got into me.

DODGSON

I daresay it was Dinah here who put the idea in your head, my dear.

ALICE

Why yes it was! What a naughty kitten you are, Dinah!

MORIARTY

Wait a second. Shhh, Mad Hat.

ALICE

What's your silly old book about, anyway, Professor Dodgson?

DODGSON

Silly old maths. Geometry, to be precise.

ALICE

Oh, yes, that. What does "The Formulae of Plane Trigonometry" mean, anyhow?

DODGSON

Oh, nothing that you need bother yourself about, it's about things like lines that never meet.

ALICE

Never? Why not? Haven't they been properly introduced? Or is it like how you can't quite touch the "you" that you see in the mirror? I often think I'd like to meet my mirror self, but you can't quite ever do it you know.

[she moves towards the mirror, peers into it.]

[Mad Hat moves towards the mirror, peers into it. They mirror each other's movements in an amusing way for a while. Alice turns away to talk to Prof D as Mad Hat moves away to talk to Prof M.]

MAD HAT

Can she see me?

ALICE

Why can't I touch her?

MORIARTY

It's impossible.

DODGSON

It's impossible.

ALICE

I wonder what your book looks like in the mirror world...

[she holds the book up, open, to the mirror. Prof M, intrigued, comes forward to see what the book says.]

ALICE

It makes even less sense now! Terrible!

MORIARTY

Now it all makes sense! Brilliant!

MAD HAT

I thought it already made sense.

DODGSON

I thought it already didn't make sense?

ALICE

It makes even less "no sense" now.

MORIARTY

Now it makes so much sense, I think I can find a way to reach into their world.

ALICE

If I can't get into the mirror world, let's go outside and you can tell me one of your stories.

DODGSON

What a delightful idea.

[he laughs lightly]

[Exit Prof D and Alice]

MAD HAT

What a delightful idea. bwah-ha-ha

[she gives a villainous laugh]

MORIARTY

What would you do if you could? Reach into their world I mean?

MAD HAT

Well, we've seen quite a lot of that world called "England" now ... there's some of the same people in it. Sort of. There's a version of me. There's a version of my young friend Alex Liddell. In many ways it's quite like our own world of Angleland.

MORIARTY

But without my airships. And mirrors into another world. And giant steam-driven mechanical men.

MAD HAT

Yes yes, and the hat with the telescope and the teapot. But there's more. That world is run by men.

MORIARTY

Oh, I hadn't spotted that.

MAD HAT

Typical mathematician. You never look beyond your equations.

MORIARTY

But don't they have a woman in charge? Queen Railway station or something?

MAD HAT

Yes, and if I can make her see that this is how things SHOULD be, she'll be right behind me in my plan.

MORIARTY

What is your plan?

MAD HAT

The same as it always is: to take over the world...

MORIARTY

Why does that sound familiar? Never mind, never mind. How do you get Queen Spongecake on your side?

MAD HAT

That girl, their version of young Alex. She is a friend of Victoria's son. We kidnap her, and she talks to him, and he talks to Victoria...

MORIARTY

He talks to a plum?

MAD HAT

No, the Queen!

MORIARTY

This all sounds very complicated. Young girls, plums, railway stations, sponge cakes, queens...

MAD HAT

Just get on with your job. Being clever. Find us a way to touch the "England" world, and bring someone back here to Angleland. Leave the evil scheming to me.

MORIARTY

Very well my lord. But isn't it time for another evil laugh first?

MAD HAT

Oh, quite right Professor. Thank you for reminding me. Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!

[exit Moriarty. Lights down]

Scene 3

in the street, outside the door of no 221b – or can be performed in front of the curtain

[enter Mrs H, stepping out of 221b]

MRS H

Hello everyone. Are you having fun? I wonder what's going to happen next? I don't like that Mad Hat character much, do you? You can never trust anyone that laughs like this:

[she imitates Mad Hat's villainous laugh badly]

Oh, except for me of course. You can trust good old Mrs Hudson.

[she shields her mouth from the audience and tries the laugh again, a little quieter.]

[she mutters to herself]

No, it's not really me at all. No wonder they gave me the romantic lead part.

[enter Artie Dodger]

DODGER

Excuse me...

MRS H

Yes, young man?

DODGER

Are you Mrs Hudson?

MRS H

Why, yes I am. How did you know? Did someone describe me? "She's this tall *[gesturing]*, beautiful, immaculately dressed..."

DODGER

er, no. Someone gave me the address. Is this where Mr Sherlock 'olmes lives?

MRS H

Why, yes it is.

[she turns to the audience and remarks]

No, I don't live with him. That wouldn't be quite proper. I'm his landlady - I let out several rooms in this house. Mr Holmes actually lives with Dr Watson. Which is of course entirely proper.

DODGER

Is Mr. 'olmes at 'ome?

MRS H

Do you have stutter young man?

DODGER

Wot?

MRS H

"'olmes at 'ome". Either a stutter or an echo. Oh, never mind, never mind. In any case, young man, No he's not here at the moment.

DODGER

Well, I got a message for 'im.

MRS H

Oh! I'm sorry, I didn't realize. You're one of his Baker Street Irregulars aren't you?

DODGER

No, I ruddy ain't!

MRS H

Language!

DODGER

Sorry, Ma'am. But I ain't one o' those smarmy so-and-sos. I hates 'em.

MRS H

[coldly]

Well, pardon me for jumping to conclusions when I see a scruffy little Herbert asking after Mr Holmes. Give me the message and be on your way.

[she holds out her hand]

DODGER

Oh, it ain't a written message. It's words, like.

MRS H

Then pray deliver your verbal communication, and I shall relay it verbatim.

DODGER

Wot?

MRS H

[sighs. Imitates Dodger's accent]

You tell it to me. I'll tell it to 'im.

DODGER

Well, why din't you say so? It's a message from a gentleman called Mr Fagin.

MRS H

Hmm. That's the first time I've heard the words "Fagin" and "gentleman" in the same sentence without also hearing "stole from the". But please carry on.

DODGER

Do wot? Oh, never mind. 'ere's the message. Don't.

MRS H

"Don't" what?

DODGER

Just "don't".

MRS H

Well, I'll pass the message on, you young thug. But I have a message for you - and for your "gentleman" too. It's about challenging Mr Holmes.

DODGER

What is it?

MRS H

"Don't".

[exit Mrs H into 221b]

[enter P C Easy]

EASY

[spotting Dodger]

Oi! I know you! You're one o' them pickpockets!

[he grabs Dodger by his coat]

Gotcha!

[Wiggler holds up 'Gotcha!' sign]

AUDIENCE

Gotcha!

DODGER

[wiggles out of his coat, leaving PC Easy holding just the coat]

No you ain't! Catch me, copper!

[exit Dodger, chased by PC Easy, who drops the coat. Easy chases him round the auditorium]

[re-enter Dodger, picks up coat]

Lost 'im!

[PC Easy is creeping up on Dodger, making frantic "Shush" signals to the audience]

[Dodger spots Easy sneaking up on him]

Whoops -no I ain't! I'd better scarper!

[exit Dodger again, chased by Easy]

P C EASY

Come back here, you little villain!

[enter Hansom Horatio, the horse.]

[enter Bertie. He catches Horatio.]

BERTIE

'oratio, you are a very very naughty 'orse. I'm gettin' fed up with this.

[spots audience]

Do you folks out there fink you could lend me an 'and? This is me 'orse. 'e's called 'ansom 'oratio. 'e's supposed to be pulling me 'ansom Cab. I'm a cabbie. Any'ow, 'e keeps runnin' away. I got 'im this time, so we can get back to work now. So I gotta go. But if you see 'im again could you shout out? Could you shout out "cabbie! cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!" Come on, let's try it now!

Cabbie! Cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!

AUDIENCE

Cabbie! Cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!

BERTIE

You can be a lot louder 'n THAT! C'mon, now!Cabbie! Cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!

AUDIENCE

Cabbie! Cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!

[Bertie repeats this several times, until the audience are enthusiastic enough.]

BERTIE

That's the spirit! I expect we'll see you later.

[Handsome Horatio chuckles and nods]

Bye now!

[exit Bertie and Horatio]

Scene 4

Setting is the same as scene 2. Prof D is in the library, writing. Prof M is in Mad Hat's office, fiddling with the device. There is the "Whumm-ee-oo-ow" noise, now slightly echoing.

DODGSON

"Dear diary..."

MORIARTY

Eureka!

DODGSON

I beg your pardon? Who said that?

MORIARTY

You can hear me? Professor Dodgson?

DODGSON

Yes, yes. Where are you? Who are you?

MORIARTY

Come over to the mirror.

DODGSON

Come over... oh, very well...

[he does so. He sees Prof M and stops, amazed]

What the devil...

MORIARTY

Interesting. You can see me as well.

DODGSON

Why, it's Alice's mirror world. I can see right through the looking-glass. Who are you? What is happening?

MORIARTY

Well, Professor, my name is Professor Jane Moriarty. I am from another world.

DODGSON

You're a Martian?

MORIARTY

No, no, I'm from the Earth, just like you. Just not the same "Earth". I've found a way to talk to other worlds. Worlds on the other side of the mirror. Like yours.

DODGSON

Can you get into them, Professor? Alice would love that! How does it work? Does it involve Lord Kelvin's theory of vortex atoms in a gyrostatically elastic ether?

MORIARTY

One question at a time, Professor. First, Yes. But there's a problem getting back.

DODGSON

There is?

MORIARTY

[Looks around briefly to find something to throw. Picks up a cuddly toy, and throws it through the mirror]

Yes. Catch.

[suddenly realizes she's thrown her lifetime companion through a one-way portal into another universe]

Oh my! What have I done? Now try to throw him back.

[Prof D tries, but it bounces off the mirror]

You see?

DODGSON

Why are you sharing all this with me?

MORIARTY

Well, firstly because it was your formula that gave me the last clue how to do this, when Alice held your book up to the mirror. And secondly because I didn't mean to throw Mr Hoppy there... he's been with me since I was a small girl. I want Mr Hoppy back!

[pulls herself together]

It's all to do with sound, you see.

DODGSON

Sound?

MORIARTY

Yes: here's the sound that allows Mr Hoppy to get to you. Or anything else... I wish I'd thrown something else... poor Mr Hoppy...

[she presses a button. We hear "Whumm-ee-oo-ow"]

Now we need to find the sound to send things back. Or indeed people.

DODGSON

Fascinating. Simply fascinating. What might it be?

MORIARTY

Well, professor, I have an idea that it might be a vocal sound.

DODGSON

[musing]

Just like a magic spell...

MORIARTY

[laughing frantically]

Well, yes. Except that it isn't of course.

DODGSON

[begins to laugh too. They find it hard to stop, as the absurdity of the idea grows upon them]

Oh, of course not! Ha! Ha! No such thing as magic...

MORIARTY

We're scientists! Ha! Ha! Ha!

DODGSON

Ha! Ha! Of course we are!

[They sober up]

MORIARTY

Hmmm... It does sound a bit like it though...

DODGSON

You know, I'm going to read a little bit about magic.

MORIARTY

A good idea. Top drawer, Dodgson. There might be some clues there...

[exit professors.]

[Enter Alice, holding a magazine called "Mischmasch"]

ALICE

This poem of Professor Charles makes no sense at all. Does it, mirror Alice?

[She holds it up to the mirror]

[re-enter Moriarty]

ALICE

Oh, I see. It was mirror-writing...

MORIARTY

How strange. The writing in that book is the right way around.

ALICE/MORIARTY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe...

[VERY loud "Whumm-ee-oo-ow"]

MORIARTY

[reaches through the mirror, grabs Alice]

Gotcha!

[Wiggler holds up "Gotcha!" sign]

AUDIENCE

Gotcha!

[lights down]

Scene 5

Inside the *Raven and Writing-Desk* pub. Dodgson is talking to Dr Watson.

DODGSON

Thank you for agreeing to introduce me to Mr Holmes, Dr Watson. His fame has spread of late, and I have a problem which will, I fear, stretch even his mighty intellect.

WATSON

Yes, well, there's something I ought to...

DODGSON

Yes, I think I can promise Holmes at least a three-pipe problem.

[enter Shamrock Holmes, Sherlock's Irish cousin]

HOLMES

But I don't smoke.

DODGSON

I'm sorry, I don't believe we've been introduced.

HOLMES

Holmes, my dear sir. Shamrock Holmes.

WATSON

Professor Dodgson, allow me to introduce Shamrock Holmes. Holmes, this is Professor Charles Dodgson.

DODGSON

"Shamrock". Not "Sherlock"?

WATSON

That's what I was trying to tell you, Professor. I'm Dr *James* Watson, and I'm a companion to *Shamrock* Holmes. It's my brother Dr *John* Watson that's a companion to Mr *Sherlock* Holmes.

HOLMES

My cousin is unavailable at the moment, sir.

DODGSON

Unavailable?

HOLMES

He had to see a man about a hound.

DODGSON

Ah...

HOLMES

They offered the job to me, but Baskerville just isn't my typeface.

DODGSON

[to Watson]

Can I assume that this Holmes will serve me as well in the problem-solving?

WATSON

[trying to sound convincing]

Oh, definitely. Absolutely. No shadow of a doubt. I'd stake my reputation on it.

HOLMES

Pray tell me your problem, Professor Dodgson.

DODGSON

It's a little complicated, and I fear that you will find my story difficult to credit.

HOLMES

Don't trouble yourself, sir. I have heard some strange tales in my time.

WATSON

Oh, yes, Holmes has no trouble at all believing the most incredible things. He's very gullible. I mean, open-minded.

HOLMES

Thank you, Watson.

DODGSON

[doubtfully]

Well, it concerns the disappearance of a young girl of my acquaintance. It seems that she entered a room, but never came out again.

HOLMES

Say no more. I have solved your case already.

DODGSON

Incredible! What is the answer to this mystery?

HOLMES

Attend me closely.

WATSON/DODGSON

Yes...

HOLMES

Open the door of the room... and the girl will still be inside!

WATSON

[applauding]

Bravo, Holmes! Capital, my dear chap! I'd never have worked that out!

DODGSON

[facepalms]

Oh believe me, gentlemen, we tried that. She was nowhere to be seen. The windows were locked from the inside, and there was only one door into the room.

HOLMES

Oh well, in that case, I'm stumped! It's a mystery and no mistake! But there is one thing...

DODGSON

What's that?

HOLMES

Beware of Spring-Heeled Jack!

WATSON

Who's Spring-Heeled Jack?

[sound effect BOING! BOING! BOING!]

JACK

ha ha ha ha ha!

[Spring-Heeled Jack appears briefly at back of stage, bouncing] [lights down]

Scene 6

Inside Mad Hat's dirigible, "Queen of Hearts" flying over Angleland. Alice is tied to a chair. Mad Hat is talking to her.

ALICE

My but you're an odd-looking sort. Who are you?

MAD HAT

But my dear, you shouldn't be talking to me. We haven't even been introduced.

ALICE

Well, I haven't yet learned all the rules of etiquette, ma'am: I am still at school, after all. But I'm fairly certain it must say somewhere in the rules that if somebody kidnaps one and ties one to a chair, one is allowed to converse with that person, if only to find out what the flip is going on.

MAD HAT

Language, my dear! Language!

ALICE

Sorry, I'm not entirely in control of myself. As a rule I'm very polite, being tied up has rather taken its toll.

MAD HAT

Think nothing of it, Miss Liddell. A little stress can bring out the beast in any of us. But to answer your earlier question: my name is Lord Newry. Although some people call me Mad Hat. I prefer "My Lord".

ALICE

I already know a Lord Newry. He's at Oxford, with my friend Professor Dodgson. But you can't be a Lord. You're a lady.

MAD HAT

Oh, I'm aware of my namesake. He's how I found you. As for me being a "Lord"- well, things are a little different here on the other side of the Looking Glass, you know. It's a little complicated, especially for someone who's still at school...

ALICE

Then shall we try a few more enquiries? Where am I? What do you want? Why did you kidnap me? When can I go home? When's luncheon?

MAD HAT

What a curious girl you are, young Alice.

ALICE

Oh, I start off curious. And then I get curiouiser and curiouiser.

MAD HAT

What a lovely phrase. You should write that down somewhere. But as to your long list of questions...

[enter Harriet March]

...they can wait for the moment. Allow me introduce my colleague, Miss Harriet March. Often known as "Mad March Harry". Harry, this is Miss Alice Liddell.

MARCH

I knows who she is, sir.

ALICE

Pleased to meet you Miss March.

MARCH

Charmed, I'm sure, youngster.

MAD HAT

And what brings you here, Miss March?

MARCH

Good news and Bad news, sir. Sorry I'm late.

MAD HAT

Good news first, Miss March. If you'd be so kind.

MARCH

Yes sir. He's taken the bait!

MAD HAT

Excellent! And the bad news?

MARCH

Well, sir, that sorta breaks up into good news and bad news too,

MAD HAT

I swear, Harry, if you drag this out all day you'll find out why they call me "Mad Hat". Bad news?

MARCH

Holmes is getting involved!

MAD HAT

Curse it! And the good news?

MARCH

Shamrock Holmes, sir. Not Sherlock. Sherlock's rather less formidable cousin.

MAD HAT

221b or not 221b, that is the question.

MARCH

Oh, very droll, ma'am. Very droll. I don't think Shamrock will ever work it out.

MAD HAT

And we won't have those tiresome Baker Street Irregulars to deal with, either. Meddlesome little brats!

MARCH

Oh, I wouldn't worry about them, in any case, Your Lordship.

MAD HAT

Why not, March?

[March holds up a carton of Activia yoghurt. Of course, if the writing was backwards it would be great...]

MARCH

Well, this should get rid of the occasional Irregular, sir.

MAD HAT

Leave the jokes to me, Harriet.

MARCH

Yes, your Evilness. Anyhow, Shamrock does seem to have *some* help anyway ma'am. A mathematician.

MAD HAT

A good one?

MARCH

Professor Dodgson, my lord.

ALICE

Oh, he's jolly good! He's my friend. And he tells a lovely story too, if you ask him very politely.

MAD HAT

I doubt if he's as good as our tame professor of mathematics.

ALICE

There's nobody cleverer -I mean more clever - than my Charles.

MAD HAT

WE have Professor Moriarty. He's the one who figured out how to get through the mirror.

[lights down]

Scene 7

outside 221b or in front of curtain

[enter Dodger, running. He pauses to talk to the audience]

DODGER

Crikey, old Easy's feeling energetic today! Whoops, 'ere 'e comes again!

[exit, running]

[enter PC Easy, running]

EASY

Crikey, that Dodger's feeling energetic today! Whoops, there he goes! Come back here!

[exit, running]

[enter Hansom Horatio, running]

AUDIENCE

Cabbie! Cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!

[exit Horatio, running]

[enter Bertie, chasing Horatio]

BERTIE

Thanks, everyone! Whoops, there 'e goes! Come back 'ere, 'oratio!!

[exit Bertie, running]

Scene 8

(NOTE: this scene takes great timing. There are two scenes happening at the same time, and the conversations mirror each other.)

Stage left is interior 221b Baker Street, in Mrs H's rooms. She is preening herself in front of a large mirror, as she talks.

Also present are Dodgson, Shamrock Holmes, and Dr Watson.

Stage right is still aboard the "Queen of Hearts". Alice has been released. Mad Hat is talking to her in quite a civilized manner.

MRS H

Let me see if I understand ...

ALICE

I don't understand, ma'am.

HOLMES

Understand what?

MAD HAT

Don't understand what, my dear?

MRS H

Because it's very confusing.

ALICE

I'm not sure.

HOLMES

It's not that hard really.

MAD HAT

You're not sure what you don't understand?

HOLMES

What's not to understand?

ALICE

They're rather the same thing, aren't they? Not understanding and not being sure? Why do I always get in a muddle when I try to explain things?

MRS H

If I understand it, there is a world through the looking-glass, and another Professor who can move between the worlds. This Professor believes that Professor may have kidnapped young Alice.

MAD HAT

Well, you are in a Looking-Glass world, Miss Liddell. Things are sure to be a trifle back-to-front.

DODGSON

And taken her through the Looking Glass.

ALICE

"elfirt"?

HOLMES

Now I'm confused again...

MAD HAT

Now I'm confused. Why did you say "elfirt"?

WATSON

Doesn't take much does it?

ALICE

"Elfirt". That's "trifle" back-to-front.

DODGSON

That is the essence of it. You are an intelligent woman, Mrs Hudson

MAD HAT

[chuckling]

So it is. So it is. You know, you're a very bright young lady.

MRS H

Why, thank you Professor!

ALICE

Perhaps I am, but I still don't understand.

HOLMES

I thought I understood, but now my head is spinning.

MAD HAT

Now we're going around in circles. What don't you understand?

HOLMES

Could we start again with the girl who went in the room?

ALICE

Very well, then: I either don't understand why you tied me up, or I don't understand why you untied me. You choose.

[enter Professor Moriarty with Harriet]

DODGSON

[sarcastically]

Why don't we start by introducing ourselves again?

MAD HAT

Oh, good day to you, Professor. Hello, Mad Harry. Time for some introductions:
Alice Liddell, Professor Moriarty: Professor Moriarty, Miss Liddell.

HOLMES

[not realizing Dodgson was being sarcastic]

Professor Dodgson, Mrs Hudson - Sherlock's landlady. Mrs Hudson, Professor Dodgson, of
Oxford University.

ALICE

We met. Briefly. When she kidnapped me. Although I don't believe that can be
considered to be a formal introduction.

DODGSON

[sighing]

Charmed, Mrs Hudson

MORIARTY

Charmed, Miss Liddell.

MRS H

It's mutual, Professor.

ALICE

It's mutual, Professor - but you're not as smart as my professor.

[Moriarty snorts]

HOLMES

Watson - explain to Mrs Hudson why the Professor came to us?.

MAD HAT

Harriet - could you explain to Miss Liddell why we tied her up?

WATSON

Oh, that's easy - He thought you were your cousin Sherlock.

MARCH

Oh that's easy. You see, Miss Liddell, we didn't want you going out that door over there and escaping into the street.

HOLMES

And would you care to explain why we're now in Baker Street?

MAD HAT

And would you care to explain why we've now untied her?

WATSON

That's easy, too. You see, Holmes, Now we'd all like to talk to Sherlock.

MARCH

That's easy too. You see, Miss Liddell, now you can't go through that door over there and escape into the street.

MRS H

I think the solution is really a lot easier than you imagine.

ALICE

Was it really easier to tie me up than lock the door?

HOLMES

Really, a lot easier?

MAD HAT

Door's not locked... try it. But try it very carefully my dear.

[Alice makes her way over to the door gingerly, and opens it. Sound effect of air rushing by. A seagull flies past the open door]

HOLMES

[baffled]

Blimey!

ALICE

Blimey!

[she covers her mouth]

Oh, I DO beg your pardon! I mean "Oh my goodness!" But we're up in the sky!
Your house is up in the sky! What's keeping us up?

MRS H

Yes. The Professor is quite mad and should be locked up. People walking through mirrors,
indeed.

[she pats the mirror]

It's not a door, it's a looking-glass.

MORIARTY

Oh, it's not a house - it's a dirigible. It's called "The Queen of Hearts".

MRS H

I can say, with my hand on my heart...

ALICE

A dirry gimble..

[there is a faint "Whumm-ee-oo-ow"]

MARCH/WATSON

What was that?

MORIARTY/DODGSON

What was what?

MARCH/WATSON

I thought I heard... oh, never mind.

ALICE

What's a dirry gimble?

[faint "Whumm-ee-oo-ow"]

DODGSON

What in the world do you mean, "locked up"?

MAD HAT

They don't have them in your world yet...they're a bit like the hot air balloons you've probably read about.

HOLMES

ooh! Can we go and visit him? I've always wanted to see a mad-house.

ALICE

ooh! I always wanted to go up in one of those!

WATSON

I'm sure you'd be welcomed in!

MAD HAT

[bows]

You're welcome, my dear!

DODGSON

To be frank, there's little to choose between this room right now and a madhouse.

ALICE

...although to be perfectly frank ma'am, if I'd a choice between being kidnapped in a Montgolfier balloon, or remaining at home a little bored... I believe I'd have plumped for the latter.

MRS H

Just because I'm not a Professor, Professor, doesn't mean I have no brains at all...

[she leans on the mirror to show that it's solid. But it isn't]

MORIARTY

Just because you've been kidnapped doesn't mean you can't enjoy yourself...

[enter Mrs Hudson through the Looking-Glass. for a moment she doesn't realize what's happened]

MRS H

Why, I'll have you know, I'm as well known for my brains as I am for my beauty, Professor.

MORIARTY

I can well believe it.

MRS H

Why, thank you. Um, where the h...

[she spots Alice just before she says "hell"]

where the flip am I? And where's Dodgson?

HOLMES

Where the flip did she go?

MAD HAT

Language!

MRS H

I do beg your pardon.

ALICE

Do you know Charlie?

DODGSON

By Jove, I do believe she went right through the looking-glass!

[lights down on both sides]

ACT 2

Scene 1

in the street, night-time

[enter Wiggins, whistling a Music-Hall tune, hands in pocket, nonchalantly striding out]

[Leopold appears from the darkness]

LEOPOLD

Psssst!

WIGGINS

[hesitates, listens, shakes head, carries on]

LEOPOLD

[approaching Wiggins]

PSSST! Boy!

WIGGINS

Yeah? Wot d'ya want? *[he sees Leopold's clothes]*...Sir?

LEOPOLD

Um, I wouldn't normally approach anyone without being introduced...my name's Leopold. How do you do?

WIGGINS

'Arry Wiggins. Wotcha!

[Socko holds up "Wotcha" sign]

AUDIENCE

Wotcha!

LEOPOLD

Oh, how amusing. Wotcha, Arry Wiggins.

[Socko holds up sign saying "Wotcha!"]

AUDIENCE

Wotcha!

WIGGINS

Well, what can I do for yer, Mr Leopold?

LEOPOLD

I've seen you talking to the Great Detective, haven't I? I believe you must be one of his "irregulars", the street-urchins he employs to help him with his investigations. Would that assumption be correct?

WIGGINS

'Ere - I know what a "Street" is, but what's an "urchin" when it's at 'ome?

LEOPOLD

I'm not entirely sure. Some sort of sea-creature if I'm not in error.

WIGGINS

Then wot's it doin' on the streets of London? Streets, which [*imitating Leopold's accent*]if one is not mistaken, are not exactly known for their quality of being subaqueous?

LEOPOLD

I'm afraid you have me stumped there, Mr Wiggins. It's just something they say.

WIGGINS

Oh, "they" say all sorts of things.

LEOPOLD

Yes, "they" do, don't "they"?

WIGGINS

"Get lost!" "Stop, thief!" and "get out of here, you scruffy so-and-so" are what the likes of YOU usually says to the likes of ME. Us "street-urchins", that is.

LEOPOLD

I'm most dreadfully sorry, Mr Wiggins, and I humbly apologize for inadvertently insulting you. But the truth is, sir, that I need your help.

WIGGINS

That's the first time anyone's called me "Mr Wiggins",and the second time anyone's ever called me "sir". That buys you me attention fer the two minutes it takes me to decide if you're one horse short of a Hansom cab ride.

[enter Hansom Horatio, the pantomime horse]

AUDIENCE

Cabbie! Cabbie! 'ere's yer 'orse!

WIGGINS

Hey, it's 'ansom 'oratio. Wotcha!

[Socko holds up "Wotcha" sign]

AUDIENCE

Wotcha!

[Horatio shows that he's pleased]

WIGGINS

[to Leopold]

When everybody says "Wotcha!" You're supposed to join in, Leopold.

LEOPOLD

Sorry, Mister Wiggins. Sorry, audience. I didn't realize it applied to domestic animals.

WIGGINS

'e's not a domestic, e's an 'orse!

LEOPOLD

But I... oh, never mind. Have it your way. Let's try that again.

WIGGINS

All right, 'oratio. Go off and come back on again.

[Hansom Horatio does so]

Wotcha!

[Socko holds up "Wotcha" sign]

AUDIENCE/LEOPOLD

Wotcha!

LEOPOLD

[to the audience]

There! I thought that went very well. Quite fun really.

WIGGINS

Wot's up, then? 'ave you run away again, 'oratio?

[Horatio nods]

You know you shouldn't do that! What's Bertie supposed to do? Pull the 'ansom cab himself?

[Horatio likes this idea and starts chuckling]

Now, look, mate, 'ere's a carrot. If I give you that will yer go back to the stables and be a good boy?

[Horatio nods reluctantly]

..and do yer job and pull the cab so Bertie can put food on the table?

[Horatio shuffles then nods]

All right then, Off ya go.

[exit Horatio]

[enter Bertie]

BERTIE

'oratio! 'oratio!

[notices audience, then Wiggins and Leopold]

Have you seen my horse, 'ansom 'oratio?

AUDIENCE

Yes!

BERTIE

Which way did he go?

[hopefully the audience help him out]

LEOPOLD

I think he was heading back to the stables. He looked a bit ashamed of himself, I fancied.

BERTIE

So he should, running away like that! I've got a wife and kids to feed.

LEOPOLD

Mr Wiggins here gave him a carrot. Does he like carrots?

BERTIE

It's his stable diet.

[exit Bertie]

LEOPOLD

I say, that's a bit of a coincidence. My Pater's a "Bertie" too.

