

Gryphon,.

Neal Lakin

Alice 'without pictures or conversations?' So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for her neck kept getting entangled among the branches, and every now and then a great crash, as if a dish or kettle had been broken to pieces. 'Please, then,' said Alice, 'how am I to get in?' asked Alice again, in a louder tone. 'ARE you to get in at all?' said the Footman. 'That's the first question, you know.' It was, no doubt: only Alice did not like to be told so. 'It's really dreadful,' she muttered to herself, 'the way all the creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy!' The Footman seemed to think this a good opportunity for repeating his remark, with variations. 'I shall sit here,' he said, 'on and off, for days and days.' 'But what am I to do?' said Alice. 'Anything you like,' said the Footman, and began whistling. 'Oh, there's no use in talking to him,' said Alice desperately: 'he's perfectly idiotic!' And she opened the door and went in. The door led right into a large kitchen, which was full of smoke from one end to the other: the Duchess was sitting on a three-legged stool in the middle, nursing a baby; the cook was leaning over the fire, stirring a large cauldron which seemed to be full of soup. 'There's certainly too much pepper in that soup!' Alice said to herself, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about; and when she had finished, her sister kissed her, and said, 'It WAS a curious dream, dear, certainly: but now run in to your tea; it's getting late.' So Alice got up and ran off, thinking while she ran, as well she might, what a wonderful dream it had been. But her sister sat still just as she left her, leaning her head on her hand, watching the setting sun, and thinking of little Alice and all her wonderful Adventures, till she too began dreaming after a fashion, and this was her dream:-- First, she dreamed of little Alice herself, and once again the tiny hands were clasped upon her knee, and the bright eager eyes were looking up into hers--she could hear the very tones of her voice, and see that queer little toss of her head to keep back the wandering hair that WOULD always get into her eyes--and still as she listened, or seemed to listen, the whole place around her became alive with the strange creatures of her little sister's dream. The long grass rustled at her feet as the White Rabbit hurried by--the frightened Mouse splashed his way through the neighbouring pool--she could hear the rattle of the teacups as the March Hare and his friends shared their never-ending meal, and the shrill voice of the Queen ordering off her unfortunate guests to execution--once more the pig-baby was sneezing on the Duchess's knee, while plates and dishes crashed around it--once more the shriek of the Gryphon, the squeaking of the Lizard's slate-pencil, and the choking of the suppressed guinea-pigs, filled the air, mixed up with the distant sobs of the miserable.