***Through the Looking Glass***

***Chapter 7***

***The Lion and the Unicorn***

***Summary:***

* Soldiers come running through the wood in a huge crowd. After them come a bunch of horses. Alice finds her way out of the stampede and into a glade where the White King is sitting, writing in his notebook.
* The King tells Alice that he's kept his promise, sending all his horses and all his men. Presumably they are going to try to put Humpty Dumpty together again. (Remember that crash at the end of Chapter 6? We think that was probably Humpty Dumpty falling off the wall.)
* The King tells Alice to look for the Messengers, who went into town. Alice peers off into the distance and sees a man walking toward them, wriggling and skipping and generally making strange gestures. The King tells Alice that these gestures are Anglo-Saxon attitudes and that the messenger's name is Haigha.
* Alice begins playing a word game with Haigha's name, thinking of other things that start with H – living on a Hill, eating Ham-Sandwiches and Hay, and so on.
* The messenger arrives and the King is disturbed by his strange gestures. By a funny coincidence, Haigha has a bag of food with just what Alice imagined in her game – ham sandwiches and hay. The White King eats some of both and feels better.
* The King asks the messenger what is happening in the town. The messenger says that the Lion and the Unicorn are fighting for the crown again.
* Verse Alert: Alice recites the nursery rhyme about the Lion and the Unicorn.
* Alice asks the King if the one who wins the fight gets the crown. He says no.
* Alice and the White King hurry toward the town to see the Lion and Unicorn fighting. They find the other messenger, Hatta, watching the fight, drinking tea, and eating bread and butter. We learn that Hatta is the messenger the White Queen mentioned who went to jail before his trial and crime.
* The Lion and the Unicorn pause in their fight and everyone takes a ten-minute break for snacks. The refreshments are the same as the ones described in the nursery rhyme: white bread, brown bread, and plum cake.
* The White Queen goes running by too fast for anyone to catch her. (Remember, Queens can move any number of squares at a time in chess, so her rapid movement is related to a move in the game.)
* The Lion and Unicorn stop by to say hello to the king. The Unicorn sees Alice and is astonished, saying he didn't believe in children and thought they were imaginary monsters. Alice says that's what she thought about Unicorns. Alice and the Unicorn agree to believe in each other from now on.
* Alice helps out by handing around the next food described in the nursery rhyme, the plum cake. At first she has trouble cutting it, but then they explain to her that it is a Looking-Glass cake; it gets handed around first and cut afterwards.
* The drums begin in the distance. (As we're sure you remember, the last line of the nursery rhyme is about the Lion and Unicorn getting drummed out of town.)
* Alice is frightened by the drums and jumps to her feet, leaping over a brook in the process –
* – and she lands in the Seventh Square.

***Synopsis:***

Alice sees soldiers and horses running through the forest as she walks into the wood. She comes across the White King, who is jotting notes down in his memorandum book. He delightedly tells Alice that he has sent out all of his horses and men, with the exception of two horses needed for “the game,” and his messengers, Haigha and Hatta, who are in town on errands. The White King asks Alice if she passed Haigha or Hatta on the road, but she declares that she has seen nobody. The White King expresses amazement that she can see “Nobody” at all, admitting that he has difficulty seeing real people. Confused, Alice looks around, and finally catches sight of Haigha wriggling toward them. When Haigha (the March Hare) arrives, the White King asks him for a hand sandwich. After devouring the sandwich, the White King munches on hay given to him by Haigha and asks his messenger if he passed anyone on the road. Haigha says he passed “nobody,” prompting the White King to declare that Alice saw Nobody too, and that Nobody must be a slow walker. Haigha asserts that he is sure that nobody walks faster than he does. The White King disagrees, explaining that Nobody would be with them now if Nobody did indeed walk faster.

Haigha informs the White King that the Lion and the Unicorn are fighting in town. As they run to town to watch, Alice repeats a nursery rhyme about the Lion and the Unicorn. In the rhyme, the Lion and the Unicorn fight for a crown, stop to eat bread and cake, and are then drummed out of town. When they arrive in town, Alice and her companions stand with Hatta (the Mad Hatter). Hatta informs them of the events of the fight thus far. The Lion and the Unicorn stop their fighting for a moment. The White King calls for a refreshment break, so Hatta and Haigha pass bread around. Alice notices the White Queen dart through, observing that someone seems to be chasing her. The White King realizes that Alice has caught sight of the White Queen and points out that she runs so quickly that following her would be fruitless.

The Unicorn approaches Alice, staring at her in disgust as it asks her what she is. Alice states that she is a child, but the Unicorn decides that she is a Monster. The Unicorn strikes up a bargain with Alice that they will believe in each other now that they have seen each other. The Unicorn calls for cake, which Haigha produces. The Lion joins them, and orders Alice to cut the cake. Despite her repeated slicing, the cake persists in coming back together. The Unicorn explains that Alice must pass the cake around first and cut afterward. Alice begins passing the cake, and it splits into three pieces, leaving her with nothing to cut. Just then, she hears a deafening drumbeat that scares her and causes her to run off in terror. She crouches on the other side of a brook, imagining that the noise also caused the Lion and the Unicorn to flee.***Brief Analysis:***

Alice again sees the power language has to dictate outcomes, for the events described in her nursery rhymes come true both for Humpty Dumpty and the Lion and the Unicorn. The crash that begins the chapter is the fall that Alice described in her nursery rhyme, an assumption reinforced by the fact that the White King sends (almost) all of his horses and men, presumably to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. Similarly, the battle between the Lion and the Unicorn unfolds in the same way as the nursery rhyme. The White King’s literalist tendencies reinforce the idea that language dictates outcomes. He mistakes Alice and Haigha’s unspecific “nobody” for a real person named “Nobody.” The White King portrays Nobody as a character who takes words at their face value, which reaffirms the inversion motif. For the White King, things and events are not explained through words, but words themselves become literal things and events.***Critical Study:***

The rumbling in the forest turns out to be thousands of soldiers and horses that have been sent by the White King. When [Alice](https://www.gradesaver.com/through-the-looking-glass/study-guide/character-list#alice) stumbles upon the White King, he tells her that he is waiting for a messenger. Alice notices a man moving strangely along the road in the distance, and the King attributes his odd movements to his "Anglo-Saxon attitudes."

The man approches, and when Alice and the White King speak to him, they use words starting with the letter H, since that is the letter that begins his name. He tells the king that "they" are at it again, and when Alice inquires about the situation, she finds out the the lion and the unicorn are having a battle. She recalls the relevant rhyme, in which the lion and the unicorn fight for the crown (which is apparently the White King's) while people bring them bread and cake and try to drum them out of town.

The three head into town so they can witness the event. They run into the other messenger, whose name also begins with an H. The King notices the White Queen running in the distance, and when Alice asks why she is running so fast, the King explains that she is probably trying to escape an enemy. Alice wonders aloud why he does not come to her aid, and he explains that she is just too fast for that to be possible.

The unicorn approaches, and it seems that in the most previous round, he emerged the winner. He notices Alice but calls her a monster because he does not know what kind of creature she is. The others tell him that she is a child, and he agrees to believe in her if she will believe in him.

The characters share plum cake, and the lion and unicorn continue to be extremely competitve. All of the sudden, loud drumming interrupts the feasting, and Alice, frightened, jumps over the next brook to escape.

The two messengers in this chapter have counterparts in *Alice's Adventures*. Hatta is the Mad Hatter and Haigha is the March Hare. The illustrations that accompany the story make this clear. Alice has met them before in her previous adventures, but she does not recognize them as characters she already knows.

In this chapter, Carroll emphasizes an important theme in his book. Throughout the work, he has been stressing the arbitrary nature of language. Alice remarks to the king that she sees nobody on the road, and he responds that she must have good eyesight to be able to see "Nobody."

This observation by the King points to the slippery nature of definitions. It plays with the definition of "nobody" and what it means to physically see something. Carroll is playing with his readers' understanding of language and forcing them to think twice about the way in which they use words in everyday speech. None of the characters in the Looking-Glass world speak normally, and most of them question language in an unusual and at the same time insightful way.

The battle between the lion and the unicorn is an episode from a popular nursery rhyme. Carroll is fond of including nursery rhymes within his works; [Humpty Dumpty](https://www.gradesaver.com/through-the-looking-glass/study-guide/character-list" \l "humpty-dumpty) is another example of this tendency.

***Critical Analysis:***

As [Alice](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Through-the-Looking-Glass/character-analysis/#Alice) continues her journey, she encounters soldiers and then the [White King](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Through-the-Looking-Glass/character-analysis/#White_King), who is sitting on the ground writing. "I've sent them all!" declares the White King: "four thousand two hundred and seven" soldiers. This is what he had promised Humpty Dumpty, should the egg ever need rescuing. However, the king admits he has kept two horses and two men in reserve. The king's messenger, Haigha (the March Hare), arrives and reports that the Lion and the Unicorn are "at it again." They are fighting for the king's crown, even though neither of them will actually get it if one wins. Alice and the king run to the fight, where they find the second messenger, Hatta (the Mad Hatter), watching the Lion and the Unicorn.

Soon the combatants pause for refreshments. At this juncture, Alice tells the White King she sees the [White Queen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Through-the-Looking-Glass/character-analysis/#White_Queen) running, and the king remarks, "There's some enemy after her, no doubt." But he does nothing more.

Alice speaks with both the Lion and the Unicorn. The Lion refers to her as "Monster," and the Unicorn and Alice share astonishment that they each thought the other wasn't real but a "fabulous monster." The Lion and Unicorn are both contentious and argue over plum cake. Before the end of the meal, loud drumming fills the air. Alice crosses another small brook and leaves.

Here again, the [White Queen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Through-the-Looking-Glass/character-analysis/#White_Queen)'s independence is highlighted. When [Alice](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Through-the-Looking-Glass/character-analysis/#Alice) tells the [White King](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Through-the-Looking-Glass/character-analysis/#White_King) she sees the White Queen running, he does not feel compelled to rescue her. Without bothering to look in the queen's direction, the king remarks, "There's some enemy after her, no doubt. That wood's full of them." Believing there are enemies aplenty in the wood, he does not send any of his soldiers to her aid. When Alice asks whether he himself will go to help the queen, he responds, "No use, no use! She runs so fearfully quick." To him, the queen has the situation under control. His focus, instead, is on the Lion and the Unicorn. Notably, he *is* intimidated by them: "he was very nervous, and his voice quite quivered."

The subject of belief surfaces again. The Unicorn is amazed that Alice is real, and she points out she thought he was a fictional being. Once they both acknowledge they thought the other was a "fabulous monster," the Unicorn proposes, "If you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?" Apparently it is not only the White Queen who can believe in the impossible.

This suspension of disbelief may also be read as a plea to young readers to hold onto their childhood beliefs as they mature. Alice is no longer the easily startled, frequently crying child of *Alice in Wonderland.* Her journey in *Through the Looking-Glass* shows a maturation that indicates girlhood is passing. In the past several chapters, she's been entreated to believe in "impossible things" and "fabulous monsters." Moreover, she's been christened "Monster" by one such creature. By extension, she is an "impossible thing" in the Looking-glass world.

Readers also might note that the Unicorn is traditionally a symbol of innocence. The Greek bestiary *Physiologus* (2nd century CE) says the only way to capture a unicorn is for a virgin to be in its path. Alice, an innocent girl, is exactly that. Although this mythological aspect is not belabored, it may not be a coincidence that the character who seems kindest to Alice is the Unicorn, a mythological creature said to be unable to resist an innocent girl.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) sees soldiers running through the wood and hides behind a tree. The soldiers all trip and fall, and their horses don't do much better. Alice finds a clearing and the [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) there, busy writing in his memorandum book. In a delighted tone, he says that he sent all his soldiers and is thrilled when Alice says that she saw them. He notes that he sent all the horses but two, as two are in play in the game. The king says that he's also missing his two messengers and asks Alice to look up and down the road in case they're coming. Alice says that she sees "nobody" on the road, and sadly, the king says that he wishes he could see "Nobody."

***Analysis Part 1:***

Knights in chess move in an L shape, which is why these soldiers fall off their horses—they very literally cannot move in a straight line because of what they are. All of these horses and men running towards the crash (which was presumably Humpty Dumpty falling off his wall) suggests that the nursery rhyme again came true: Alice is still very much in control of this narrative, even if she's not entirely sure of it.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) continues to look up the road and she exclaims that she can see someone coming slowly and skipping oddly. The [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) says that the messenger is an Anglo-Saxon messenger and his behaviors are "Anglo-Saxon attitudes." The messenger's name is [Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha). Alice can't help herself. She begins saying that she loves Haigha "with an H" because he's happy, hates him because he's hideous, and feeds him ham sandwiches and hay. She struggles to come up with a town that begins with H and the king, seemingly unaware that he's joining in Alice's game, says that Haigha lives on the hill. The White King says that he has two messengers so that he has one to come and one to go. The other's name is [Hatta](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/hatta).

***Analysis Part 2:***

While not a nursery rhyme or a song, per se, the game that Alice plays to remember Haigha's name might function in the same way. The fact that it's a game reinforces the motif of chess and games in general and adds more credence to the possibility that Alice's nonsensical musings are going to come true once Haigha gets closer, given that the chess game has proceeded thus far in the same way that the introduction laid out. In this sense, Looking-glass World does follow a logical pattern, but again, it's not applied evenly.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) doesn't understand why the [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) needs two messengers. He says impatiently that he needs one to fetch and one to carry. [Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha) arrives, out of breath, and when the king says that Alice loves him with an H, his movements become even more absurd. The king asks for a ham sandwich, which Haigha produces from a pouch around his neck. The king eats it and asks for another, but Haigha says he only has hay left. The king accepts the hay and remarks that there's nothing like a snack of hay when he feels faint. Alice suggests that cold water might be better, but the king says he wasn't talking about what's best.

***Analysis Part 3:***

As expected, Haigha produces items that Alice spoke of while playing her game. That Alice seems unaware that she has this power to dictate how life proceeds in Looking-glass World suggests that she still feels like a child who's not in control of her surroundings, even if she is in her own dream. That she feels out of control suggests again that childhood is anxiety-inducing and is, at times, hard for everyone to get through.

***Summary Part 4:***

The [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) asks [Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha) who he saw on the road and he is pleased to hear that Haigha saw nobody. He asks Haigha what he saw in the next town over. Haigha says that he's going to whisper it, which makes [Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) sad—she wants to know what he saw. To her surprise, Haigha shouts in the king's ear, "They're at it again." Shocked, the king threatens to punish Haigha. Alice asks who's at it, and the king explains that the [Lion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters) and the [Unicorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-unicorn) are fighting for his crown. They all run to watch and, as they go, Alice mutters an old song about a lion and a unicorn fighting for the crown, eating white and brown bread, and receiving plum cake before being chased out of town with drums.

***Analysis part 4:***

Alice's recitation of the song about the Lion and the Unicorn should mean that Alice is going to come across an actual Lion and a Unicorn, eat bread and cake, and then hear drums—language, in this case, can make these seemingly unrelated and nonsensical things come true. The King and Haigha's ineptitude again suggests that adults don't have everything figured out just because they're adults.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) asks if the winner gets the crown, a suggestion that shocks the [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king). She quickly finds that she's out of breath, but the White King refuses to stop. They finally reach a big crowd surrounding the fighting [Lion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters) and [Unicorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-unicorn). They join [Hatta](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/hatta), who's drinking tea and eating buttered bread. [Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha) whispers to Alice that Hatta just got out of prison, so he's hungry and thirsty. He asks how Hatta is and how prison was, but Hatta cries and refuses to speak. The king finally demands that Hatta tell them how the fight is going. With a gulp, Hatta says that each fighter has been down about 87 times. Alice asks if they'll bring the bread around soon, which Hatta confirms. The Lion and the Unicorn sit down and pant and the king calls for a break for refreshments.

***Analysis Part 5:***

When the White King is shocked by the suggestion that the winner might get his crown, it shows that Alice is again trying to be too literal—in this instance, she needs to be less serious and less literal about how she interprets what the king says. However, it's worth noting that until the king clarifies, there's no reason to believe that the winner wouldn't get the crown. The reasoning here doesn't make sense, which makes the king's anxiety about the fight make even less sense.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha) and [Hatta](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/hatta) carry around trays of white and brown bread. [Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) takes a piece but finds it very dry. The [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) says that the [Lion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters) and the [Unicorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-unicorn) won't fight more today, so he commands that Hatta get the drums. Alice watches silently and then notices the [White Queen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-queen) running in the distance. The king says that someone is probably chasing her and when Alice expresses concern, the king insists that he can't help. He opens his memorandum book to make a note and asks how to spell "creature."

***Analysis Part 6:***

The White Queen, as a chess queen, can move as many squares as she'd like in any direction, while the king has to stay pretty still. This is why he can't rescue her and, for that matter, wouldn't be of much help since she's far more mobile and looks like she could escape anything.

***Summary Part 7:***

The [Unicorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-unicorn) saunters by the [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king), eyes his crown, and suggests that he did the best this time. The king nervously chastises the Unicorn for stabbing the [Lion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters). The Unicorn insists it didn't hurt the lion and catches sight of [Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice). He stares at her with disgust and asks what "it" is. [Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha) eagerly introduces Alice as a big and "natural" child. The Unicorn admits that he thought children were "fabulous monsters" and asks if Alice is alive. Haigha says that Alice can talk. With a smile, Alice says that she thought that unicorns were fabulous monsters. The Unicorn asks if they can agree to both believe in the other's existence.

***Analysis part 7:***

Again, the White King's nervousness when the Unicorn eyes his crown suggests that there's something funny here—there's no reason to be so uncomfortable if he's never actually going to lose his crown. The exchange between Alice and the Unicorn speaks to the power of learning about individuals who are different, whether those individuals are fantastical or not. This skill and openness will be useful to anyone at any stage of life.

***Summary part 8:***

The [Unicorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-unicorn) shouts for the [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) to grab the plum cake. The king talks [Haigha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/haigha) through pulling a plum cake, a dish, and a knife out of his bag. The [Lion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters) joins, looking sleepy. He asks what Alice is and excitedly, the Unicorn says that Alice is a fabulous monster. The Lion asks that "Monster" pass around the plum cake and demands that the king and the unicorn sit down so they can share fairly. The king is clearly uncomfortable as the Lion and the Unicorn argue over who won and who will win in the future.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Some scholars believe that the Lion and the Unicorn are metaphors for a fight for the British crown in the Victorian era, offering another example of Lewis Carroll touching on contemporary goings-on to make a point that it's not worth taking any of it too seriously. The fight in the novel also appears pointless and like it's going to continue, suggesting again that it's futile to worry about it.

***Summary Part 9:***

The [White King](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-white-king) tries to change the subject, but the [Lion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters) ignores the attempt and notices that [Alice](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/alice) is struggling to cut the cake. Alice saws at the cake and laments that the pieces won't separate. The [Unicorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/through-the-looking-glass/characters/the-unicorn) grouses that Alice doesn't know how to deal with Looking-glass cakes and instructs her to pass it around first and then cut it. Alice thinks this sounds silly, but does as she's told. The cake divides itself. The Unicorn and the Lion argue over who got the bigger piece, but the drums begin and drown everything else out. Alice leaps over a brook and watches the Lion and the Unicorn get up as though to fight.

***Analysis Part 10:***

By doing what she's told when the Unicorn tells her how to cut the cake shows that after a while in Looking-glass World, Alice is learning to adapt to what this world throws at her and understands that she needs to follow the instructions of those around her. When the drums start, it again follows the song that Alice recited when she learned about the Lion and the Unicorn and suggests that Alice is still in control of what's happening in her dream.