

An invitation from the Queen to play croquet." The Frog-Footman repeated, in the same solemn tone, "From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet." Then they both bowed low and their curls got entangled together.

When Alice next peeped out, the Fish-Footman was gone, and the other was sitting on the ground near the door, staring stupidly up into the sky. Alice went timidly up to the door and knocked.

"There's no sort of use in knocking," said the Footman, "and that for two reasons. First, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are; secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you." And certainly there *was* a most extraordinary noise going on within—a constant howling and sneezing, and every now and then a great crash, as if a dish or kettle had been broken to pieces.

"How am I to get in?" asked Alice.

"*Are* you to get in at all?" said the Footman. "That's the first question, you know."

Alice 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 caldron 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 for sneezing. Even the Duchess sneezed occasionally; and as for the baby, it was sneezing and howling alternately without a moment's pause. The only two creatures