



# The Lewis Carroll Writing Competition 2021

## An Unlikely Pair

By Evie Kilborn

This is placed directly after “A Caucus-Race and “A Long Tale” in “Alice in Wonderland”

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Looking a little closer, it became obvious that it was not the mouse but some other creature. It was rather mouse-like in shape: small and a similar brown colour, however it had a distinctly different tail. This tail was large and bushy, and curved towards the top. Alice thought back to where she had seen this tail before, “It is a squirrel, yes! That’s it. A squirrel! Oh! How delightful! I often see squirrels in my garden. My Dinah just adores watching them as they dash around.” Alice sighed “Oh, how I wish she were here.” She began to feel very lonely once more but there was no time for tears as another squirrel raced past her, almost knocking her off her feet.

“Excuse me!” Alice said, holding out her arms to steady herself. “You could have made me fall over!”

“But, I didn’t!” Replied the squirrel. “If you hadn’t been standing there then I wouldn’t have almost ran into you.”

“But...but...”

“He’s right you know,” replied the other squirrel, Alice had spotted first. “If you had moved out of the way then there would be no problem.”

“Exactly,” said the racing squirrel “you ought to be more observant...” he raised his arm gesturing for her name.

“Alice, my name is Alice”

“Then you ought to be more observant, Alice.” He finished.

The squirrels both turned at the same time and headed in the same direction. “Wait!” Alice called after them, her walk turning into a run. “Where are you going?”

“We’re going this way, isn’t it obvious?” they replied at the same time, pointing towards the forest in front of them. There were two openings in the trees creating two different pathways, both identical. The outcome of these pathways, a mystery.

“Would you mind if I follow you?” Alice asked, unsure of which way to go next. The loneliness she felt only mere moments before persuaded her that she was better off with company. The squirrels looked at each other and then back at Alice.

“No, no, no.” The squirrels said simultaneously.

Alice could feel her temper starting to rise again (something she was accustomed to at this point). "Why not?" She questioned.

"Because, Alice, there is only one of you," replied one squirrel.

"But two paths." Finished the other.

"Can I not just follow you?" Alice asked. "Why must all creatures here be so difficult to talk to?" She thought to herself.

"Oh no, no, no" The two said in unison (a habit they had). "There must be two, one for each path or trouble will come your way."

"Well how will that work when there is only one of me?" Alice's temper could only be held back for a short while longer.

"You must reflect on yourself to find the answer." One squirrel said before hurtling down one of the pathways.

"Be more observant, Alice" The other squirrel said, doing the same but in the other direction.

"Come back! What do you mean?" Alice shouted as she stood between the two openings in the forest.

"Oh what could they possibly mean?" Alice asked the trees in front of her half expecting them to talk back, after all she has come across stranger happenings today. "Reflect on yourself? On myself? How can that be possible?"

Just as she finished her sentence she felt a small tap on her right shoulder. She swiftly turned around. In a hurry she leaped backwards, surprised by what she was currently looking at. For there was an exact replica of herself staring back at her. Alice stepped back up in front of the mirror with uncertainty and slowly raised her hand to wave at the other little girl in front of her.

Alice breathed a sigh of relief when the girl reflected the same movements at the same time as her. "Oh it is just a mirror! Just like the one in my bedroom back at home." She thought to herself. "How peculiar to find such a thing in the forest." Alice suddenly became overwhelmed with disappointment. "If only there were two of me, then I could go through the forest."

Alice walked around the mirror in a circle making sure that it was not any kind of doorway, which wouldn't be out of place here. But she found that it was just a normal mirror. She looked into the eyes of her reflection and began to wish for it to be a real person. Alice thought about in her school room there are two twin sisters Mary and Lucy. She had always thought that it would be interesting to have someone who looks exactly like you, the closest she had to a twin was her older sister but it was not the same. "Oh how I wish my sister were here now, she would know what to do." sighed Alice as she stared at her reflection.

As she began to walk closer to one of the pathways she felt someone pull her backwards by her hand. She turned around in surprise. It was her reflection. "How can you do that?" She questioned. This place truly was peculiar, Alice pulled on the hand of the other Alice and oddly the girl took a step out of the mirror.

Alice shook the hand of the girl she was face to face with, and to Alice's surprise she shook her hand back. "How do you do?" Alice had been taught by her father to always be polite when meeting new people, however Alice was unsure whether this was a new person, but she thought she ought to be polite in any case. The other Alice did not reply, simply smiled and nodded her head. Alice was unsure whether this other Alice could talk or not. Perhaps she was just shy. "Do you know how I am supposed to go through this forest when there is only one of me and two paths?" The other Alice smiled and nodded. At that moment it had dawned on Alice that there was now not just one of her but two. "Oh good! Now we can both go down one path each!" The other Alice nodded once more and walked up to the right path, ordinary Alice the left.

They both stared down the paths eager to explore. "Alright, I will see you on the other side. Are you ready?" Alice said to the other Alice, who only nodded in response. Alice began to walk along the path. Looking to the side she had already lost sight of her new twin as she travelled deeper into the woods. Alice pondered the fact that she now had a new twin sister. "What will I tell my family?" Thought Alice, "And where will she sleep, there's certainly not enough room in my bed!" Alice began to talk out loud to herself.

Strolling along the pathway, Alice had to be careful of where she placed her feet as the path was littered with broken twigs and leaves. The pathway was not as short as Alice had hoped it would be, she was finding her legs to be rather tired with all of this walking. A bright pink butterfly flew past Alice's head. She watched in awe as this butterfly fluttered further into the forest. Alice smiled, a new surge of optimism urging her forward. "I must get back home." Alice affirmed.

She began marching with purpose through the last length of the path. A clearing had opened up revealing the end. Alice quickened her footsteps eager to be reunited with her new twin. She paced towards the clearing and looked around for any sign of another Alice. "Hello? Where are you?" Alice called out along the treeline, but there was no answer. "How unusual," Alice stated. "Perhaps she got lost?"

Alice looked further along the treeline of the forest but there was no sign of the other Alice, or even more curiously, the path. Alice shook her head in confusion, the other Alice must have continued on without her. She turned to face the clearing determined to finish her journey, perhaps she would see the other Alice again, or perhaps not (Alice was not sure if she had enough room to share her bedroom anyway).

A flash of movement appeared in the corner of Alice's eye. She turned her head, it seemed to have just passed the oak tree in front of her. Hopeful that this would be the other Alice, she started running towards the tree, slowing as she became closer.

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