

Myths & Tales: *Alice In Wonderland*

Well, you all know Alice, but did you know that the actual title is *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, written in 1865 by English author Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll?

Alice was published three years after the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and the Reverend Robinson Duckworth rowed in a boat, on 4 July 1862, up the Isis with the three young daughters of Henry Liddell (the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University and Dean of Christ Church): Lorina Charlotte Liddell (aged 13) ("Prima" in the book's prefatory verse); Alice Pleasance Liddell (aged 10) ("Secunda" in the prefatory verse); Edith Mary Liddell (aged 8) ("Tertia" in the prefatory verse).

The journey began at Folly Bridge near Oxford and ended five miles away in the village of Godstow. During the trip, the Reverend Dodgson told the girls a story that featured a bored little girl named Alice who goes looking for an adventure. The girls loved it, and Alice Liddell asked Dodgson to write it down for her. He began writing the manuscript of the story the next day, although that earliest version no longer exists. The girls and Dodgson took another boat trip a month later when he elaborated the plot, and in November he began working on the manuscript in earnest.

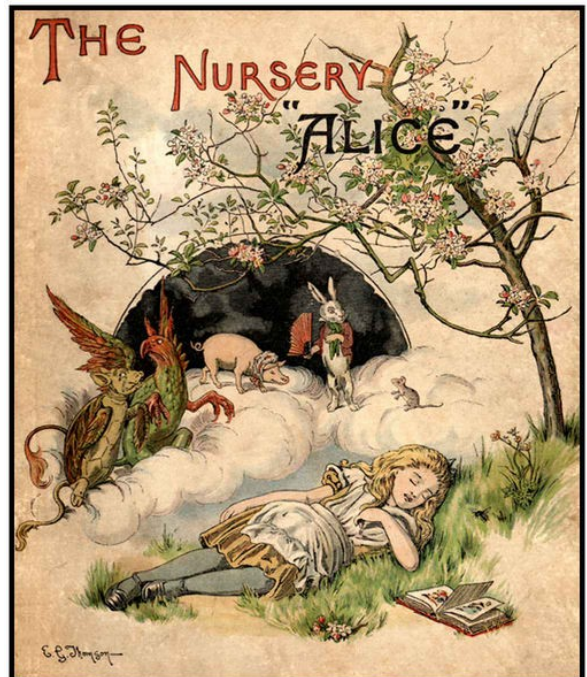
To add the finishing touches, he researched natural history for the animals presented in the book, and then had the book examined by other children—particularly the children of George MacDonald. He added his own illustrations but approached John Tenniel to illustrate the book for publication, telling him that the story had been well liked by children.

On 26 November 1864, he gave Alice the handwritten manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, with illustrations by Dodgson himself, dedicating it as "A Christmas Gift to a Dear Child in Memory of a Summer's Day". Some, including Martin Gardner, speculate there was an earlier version that was destroyed later by Dodgson when he wrote a more elaborate copy by hand.



But before Alice received her copy, Dodgson was already preparing it for publication and expanding the 15,500-word original to 27,500 words, most notably adding the episodes about the Cheshire Cat and the Mad Tea-Party.

In 1865, Dodgson's tale was published as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by "Lewis Carroll" with illustrations by John Tenniel. The first print run of 2,000 was held back because Tenniel objected to the print quality. A new edition, released in December of the same



year, but carrying an 1866 date, was quickly printed. The text blocks of the original edition were removed from the binding and sold with Dodgson's permission to the New York publishing house of D. Appleton & Company. The binding for the Appleton Alice was virtually identical to the 1866 Macmillan Alice, except for the publisher's name at the foot of the spine. The title page of the Appleton Alice was an insert cancelling the original Macmillan title page of 1865, and bearing the New York publisher's imprint and the date 1866.

The entire print run sold out quickly. *Alice* was a publishing sensation, beloved by children and adults alike. Among its first avid readers were Queen Victoria and the young Oscar Wilde. The book has never been out of print. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has been translated into at least 97 languages. There have now been over a hundred editions of the book, as well as countless adaptations in other media, especially theatre and film.

The book is commonly referred to by the abbreviated title *Alice in Wonderland*, which has been popularized by the numerous stage, film and television adaptations of the story produced over the years. Some printings of this title contain both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice*. [Wikipedia]

The White Rabbit by John Tenniel, coloured



Alice in Wonderland, John Tenniel, 1865

