

# Alice in Trappist-1-Land

An adaptation of Alice in Wonderland  
by Lewis Carroll

Adapted by Rebecca Klein and Rachel Kimberlin

## Scene 1.

(We see ALICE sitting outside on the quad, reading her Astronomy textbook. It is a beautiful day outside. She reads aloud the textbook to herself)

ALICE

"In 2017, not just one, but seven Earth-size planets that could potentially harbor life were identified orbiting a tiny star, named Trappist-1, about 40 light-years, or 235 trillion miles, from Earth. This offered the first realistic opportunity to search for signs of alien life outside the solar system." Exoplanet...what the heck is an exoplanet?

(ALICE yawns and gives up on the textbook, deciding to give into the warm sun and take a quick nap. The last thing she sees before closing the textbook is a picture of an astronaut in a white space-suit looking up at her. The light changes as the WHITE RABBIT, dressed in a space-suit, runs by ALICE; she at first regards him with little interest. ALICE yawns.)

ALICE

A White Rabbit wearing an astronaut suit...

(The WHITE RABBIT pauses and consults his cell phone clock.)

WHITE RABBIT

(Nervously.)

I'm late, I'm late, I'm very, very late. I'm late. I'm late, I'm late, I'm very late, I'm late, I'm late, I'm very late.

ALICE

And holding a cellphone . . . Jeez...

(She settles back against the tree, closing her eyes. Then she sits up abruptly, realizing how unusual the situation really is.)

An astronaut rabbit!? With a cellphone!? Uh..Mr.(?) Rabbit? Wait!

WHITE RABBIT

Oh, my dear paws! She'll be absolutely savage! I'm late!

(He begins to run off and ALICE jumps up and follows him. There is an extended chase through the theatre)

ALICE

Mr. Rabbit!

WHITE RABBIT

(enters House Left Door 1)

Oh, my fur and whiskers! She'll have me executed! I'm late, I'm late, I'm late!

(exits House Right Door 1)

ALICE

Late for what? Oh, please, please wait!

(Alice runs after the White Rabbit. Blackout.)

## **Scene 2: Take off**

(Lights up on a hall lined with large doors. The WHITE RABBIT scurries onstage at the other end and disappears. Alice tries to pursue but is blocked by the doors. We see that the doors are inside a spaceship)

ALICE

(Calling.)

Mr. Rabbit! Mr. Rabbit! Now, where could he have gone?

(Trying all the large doors in quick succession) They're all locked! How will I ever get out again?

DOORS

You are in the spaceship!

(They laugh. Alice and the Door Dance.)

DOORS

What you need is a a seatbelt.

ALICE

A seatbelt?

DOORS

Yep. Buckle in, we've only got 40 light years to go!

(Blackout.)

### **Scene 3: Tweedle Dee/Tweedle Dum Tour Guides**

(Lights come up on the spaceship. The doors open and at the bottom of the exit stairs, we see TWEEDLE DEE and TWEEDLE DUM, ALICE's new tour guides.)

TWEEDLE DEE

Hello! I'm Tweedle Dee!

TWEEDLE DUM

Hello! I'm Tweedle Dum!

(BOTH)

And we're your tour guides!

(For this section, the lines are randomly split between the two characters as they are essentially one (small) brain.)

We're so excited you've landed on Trappist -lf! You're going to love it! We do apologize that it was such a long journey and that being a human, you're severely affected by time and now you are approximately 40 years older than you were... but we'll stop by the gift shop and getcha a free t-shirt!

(ALICE looks down at herself, noticing she has aged forty years and now looks about 60 years old. The TWEEDLES loop arms with ALICE on each side and keep walking about the space with her.)

Now you may be thinking "this is such a different planet, I have nothing to compare it to!" Well have no fear, because we know exactly what to compare it to! All of our fellow planets revolve around Head Trappist-- That's our star. He's a dwarf star, but prefers we call him "head trappist" so people know he's in charge. Small planet

complex or something... Anyway, the planet closest to Head Trappist orbits in just a day and a half! Whereas the farthest planet takes about 20 days to orbit. This isn't very much when compared to the 88 days of Mercury and the 165 years for Neptune. Here, we like stuff to be one quick. Oh! By the way, here's something for you.

(TWEEDLE DEE hands ALICE an envelope, which she opens.)

#### Scene 4: Queen

(TWEEDLE DEE and TWEEDLE DUM disappear quickly and we see ALICE alone on the stage. She is holding a large, royal-looking piece of paper.)

ALICE

(reads)

"Dear Alice, you have been cordially invited to play croquet with the Queen. Please arrive at the castle in twenty minutes and *don't* be late. The official address is, 'Queen's Castle, Atacama Ln, Trappist-1f.'" How very strange. The queen wants to see *me*. I will have to see her at once.

(Blackout.)

(Lights come up on the QUEEN, who is an alien, playing croquet with her servants watching.)

QUEEN

Hole in one!

(The QUEEN is dancing in around as the servants half-heartedly cheer on her victory. She sees ALICE and stops.)

QUEEN

You must be Alice.

ALICE

Why, yes. I am Alice. How do you know my name?

QUEEN

Oh, who on Trappist-1f hasn't heard of the great Alice? The first human to touch our soil?

ALICE

Oh, I don't mean to intrude... I was brought here by the white rabbit. I was just doing my homework and learning about your planet when suddenly I was on a spaceship bound for Trappist-1f.

QUEEN

Of course. *Learning* about our planet. What else are they teaching you about down there? The stellar parallax?

(The servants chuckle)

ALICE

(Looks around nervously)

I'm sorry, that's in a later chapter... I can go if I'm not welcome, I just thought-

QUEEN

You just *thought* what? That you could come check out the planet? The super groovy new planet that is only one of seven to revolve around Trappist 1? Did you think you'd take a look around and report back to your humanoids that we reside in the "habitable zone?" Where the heat from the star is neither too cold nor too hot for water to exist in liquid form on its surface. <sup>1</sup>

ALICE

It's also referred to as the Goldilocks Zone.

QUEEN

What?

ALICE

It's also referred to as the-

QUEEN

You dare correct the Queen?! I am henceforth banishing you to the *Warm Side!*

(The servants murmur. This is not good.)

ALICE

This Warm Side? Well what's that? I don't think I want to go to the Warm Side!

QUEEN

Oh you'll see soon enough. Rabbit! (beat) Goodbye, Alice.

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<sup>1</sup> Overbye, Dennis. "New Planet May Be Able to Nurture Organisms." *New York Times*. N.p., 29 Sept. 2010. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

(Blackout.)

### **Scene 5: Tip from White Rabbit**

(ALICE, distraught from her encounter with the QUEEN, now wants to go home--after all, she will be 100 years old by the time she travels the 40 light years back to Earth, and she wants to see her family before she dies. She wanders along Trappist-1f trying to find any clues that will show her the way back, when she sees the WHITE RABBIT running by in his space-suit.

ALICE

White rabbit, white rabbit--come back! I want to go home!

WHITE RABBIT

I'm sorry, I haven't any time to help you--I'm late for my space shuttle's take-off!

ALICE

Oh, oh, can't I go with you?!

WHITE RABBIT

Sorry, Alice. We're not going back to Earth. It's important that we keep looking for more exoplanets. Not only are they our best hope for finding life on another planet, but they also tell us a great deal about the origins of our solar system.

ALICE

I don't understand..

WHITE RABBIT

Well, you see... "The Solar System is 4.6 billion years old, but there is no way to measure directly how it formed and it was, until recently, the only planetary system that we knew of, so there was nothing to compare it with. We had no idea if it was one of many, a typical example of a planetary system or a unique

one-off. Studying the formation of other young planetary systems may give us answers.”<sup>2</sup>

ALICE

Hmm.. I think I remember hearing about that in Astronomy class. I wish I had paid more attention.

WHITE RABBIT

Well get back to class! It's never too late. Just find the Mad Hatter, she will show you the way back to Earth.

ALICE

The Mad Hatter... Got it.

(The WHITE RABBIT runs off to another space expedition, and ALICE continues her wandering until she comes across the MAD HATTER, drinking space tea from a space tea cup.)

### **Scene 6: Mad Hatter/Riddle**

MAD HATTER

Why, hello there Alice. I had a feeling you would be coming along soon.

ALICE

You know who I am? How did you know I would be here?

MAD HATTER

I may be mad, but I'm not dumb. Now, I understand that you want to leave planet Trappist-1f?

ALICE

Well... Yes. It's very nice and all, but I think I'd like to be going home soon.

MAD HATTER

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<sup>2</sup> "Exoplanets 101." NASA. NASA, 05 Jan. 2017. Web. 27 Mar. 2017.

Understandable. Seasonal Affect Disorder?

ALICE

Excuse me?

(The MAD HATTER gestures to the star, Trappist-1, looming large in the sky above them, and then gestures around them)

MAD HATTER

Our star doesn't exactly give us a lot of light. I understand if the darkness is a bit gloomy.

ALICE

Oh! Well... That wouldn't exactly be Seasonal Affect Disorder, since you don't have seasons...or at least, the seasons on this side of your planet won't change, since Trappist-1f is in gravitational lock with its star...

(Silence.)

You know... like it always has one side facing the star... just like the same side of Earth's moon is always facing Earth. And we're currently on the side facing the star...which is why it's relatively warm...

(Awkward silence.)

You know, it's not really important.

MAD HATTER

Would you like to hear my riddle? Answering it will send you back to Earth.

ALICE

Yes! Yes please.

MAD HATTER

Swell then. Why is it that planets like Trappist-1f, that orbit ubercool dwarfs, are particularly good places to find aliens, like myself?

ALICE

Uh...



MAD HATTER

I'll give you a hint. It has to do with the dim lighting.

ALICE

OH! I know this! I was reading about it in my Astronomy textbook right before I... before the White Rabbit took me here!

MAD HATTER

Go on...

ALICE

"Almost all stars shine as a result of the nuclear fusion of hydrogen into helium." But smaller stars, like ubercool dwarfs, have a slower rate of energy generation than more massive planets. And since burning that fuel--the hydrogen--is what causes the planet's brightness--the planets orbiting the slow-burning dwarfs, like Trappist-1f, are lit much more dimly."<sup>3</sup>

MAD HATTER

That's exactly right. But you're not quite there. Why does the slower rate of nuclear fusion mean Trappist-1f is a good home for aliens?

ALICE

Oh, that's obvious. Smaller stars burn their hydrogen more slowly than more massive stars, meaning they live much longer. And for something--someone, as highly developed as yourself to evolve, you would need to have been on this planet for a long time! So we're much more likely to find advanced alien lifeforms on planets orbiting the dwarfs, where you've had time to evolve.

(Silence. In her excitement, ALICE failed to notice notice the MAD HATTER disappear. A voice speaks from the darkness)

MAD HATTER

You've done it, Alice! I think you're ready to go back and share what you've learned with your fellow humanoids on Earth.

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<sup>3</sup> Graham, John. "How Long Do Stars Usually Live?" *Scientific American*. N.p., 24 Feb. 2003. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

(Blackout.)

Scene 6: Waking Up

(Lights come up on Alice. She is back on the quad, lying on her stomach with her face resting on her opened Astronomy textbook. Maybe she's drooling.)

ALICE

(While still asleep)

I don't want to be a hundred... I have to pass astronomy...

(We hear a dog bark. She starts awake)

I don't wanna be a hundred!

(beat)

Wait. I'm not! I'm twenty again! Yes! This is wonderful.

(We see a young woman approach ALICE)

WOMAN

Alice, are you okay?

ALICE

Oh, I'm wonderful! I was in this spaceship, and then I met the queen! Well- not that real queen, the *space* queen and I-

WOMAN

Alice, Alice, calm down. You aren't making any sense. Aliens aren't real.

ALICE

(realizing she sounds a little crazy)

You're right. (laughs) I don't know what I ate that made me dream such a weird thing! Do you want to grab lunch? I'm starving.

WOMAN

Sure! Let me go grab my wallet.

(She exits. ALICE goes to put her books away and upstage, we see the Mad Hatter sitting on a quilt, drinking her space tea. ALICE sees her, waves and smiles, then exits S.L.)

(Blackout. End of Play.)