

VOYAGE AND RETURN: LOSING OURSELVES, FINDING OURSELVES

VIDEO ONE

On the banks of a river Alice finds herself restless. She's constantly being told "It's time to enter society Alice. It's time to grow up Alice". But Alice isn't ready to grow up.

She dreams of a world where she's not restrained. A world more vibrant, more full of life. Which is when her attention is drawn towards a white rabbit... in a waistcoat.

Alice's curiosity gets the better of her as she slopes away in pursuit.

Only this adventure leads her down paths least expected. Down a rabbit hole, no less, as she's plunged out of her world and into another.

A land of wonders; mushrooms which, when eaten, cause her to change size; talking mice and rabbits; disappearing cats; a tea-party with a Hatter that seems to last forever. Or at least for as long as it's teatime—which, in Wonderland, seems to be always.

There's no stuffiness here. No rules or restrictions. Imagination at its best. It's wonderful – until it isn't.

Because something dark lurks at the edges. Alice's new friends are jumpy and nervous. Because of course, in a world where rules don't apply, danger looms.

Which Alice experiences first-hand when the mischievous Cat leads her into a game of croquet, with flamingos as mallets and hedgehogs as balls. With the Queen of Hearts, and her battalion of playing card soldiers.

But the Queen of hearts spells trouble.

The Queen holds great power in Wonderland, but is wild and unpredictable. Tyrannical and unfair.

The Cat persists in his mischievousness. Pranking the Queen and fuelling her rage. Until Alice finds that *she's* the one who gets the blame.

She's in the docks, but it's all made-up!

The arguments are nonsense. There is no evidence. And the friends she'd made along the way are no help at all.

Unable to remain quiet Alice can't hold back any longer. Eating the mushroom that causes people to change size, she now towers over the court. She scolds the Queen for her rash behaviour, and sees her once powerful army for what they are –“Nothing but a pack of cards!”

Alice shrinks down again, before the enraged Queen thunders: “Off with her head!”.

A frantic chase ensues, leading Alice back to the door through which she arrived at Wonderland. It's locked but peering through the lock she sees herself. Asleep at the side of the river. With the Queen's army getting closer and closer, she pleads – “Wake up Alice!”.

And she does. Back at the same old riverbank.

Back in the real world, she re-enters the same stuffy expectations. The same restrictive rules. What will Wonderland mean? Rules have been challenged. Wonder has awakened.

As she gets up, is there a spark in those eyes that wasn't there before? One thing's certain. Alice after Wonderland isn't the same as Alice before it.

Back around the family table. Timid Alice has become confident Alice. Stuffy expectations persist, but are now ripe for challenge. Her relationship with this old, familiar world is altered because *she* is altered.

Although her world is no different, *everything* has somehow changed.