Alice's Adventures on the Moon

by looneyngilo2

Summary

A short story imagining Alice's adventures on the moon.

Notes

Set about 6 months after the events in Through the Looking Glass.

See the end of the work for more notes

“Now, really, Dinah, don’t you agree? Does the moon not look like a giant wheel of cheese? Or perhaps it’s a drop of gold?” asked Alice, yawning and stretching out in the window seat. She stroked Dinah’s back, listening to her purring. “Well, you’re quite right, Dinah, a giant wheel of cheese is of no interest to you, but perhaps it will be to all the little mice you like to - well, you never do catch them. But you’d like to, and that’s all that matters. The effort you put forth.”

Reaching up to try to undo her updo, she said, “Isn’t that right? Effort is - is - what is that word?” she said, her eyelids heavy. She blinked, once, twice, trying to keep her eyes open, when -

“A mouse, Dinah! A mouse!” she squealed, upon seeing a mice running down the windowsill. She jumped up from her seat, pushing the very disconcerted Dinah to the ground. “Catch him!”

The mouse stood up on its hind legs and let out a “Yip!”

“Oh! I’m sorry, Mr. Mouse - or Mrs... One never can tell with these things. I - I don’t mean for Dinah to... well, to do anything that a cat naturally wouldn’t, but -”
“Yip! Now, I am a Mr. Mouse, yes. Miss, or boy? It is hard with you human creatures -”

“Well, really, I wouldn’t think it so difficult to see that I am a lady. Or a girl, I’m not quite sure if one can be a lady when one is a child, even if one behaves like a lady - though I’m not sure I do.”

“Well, girl, then, I am to be on my way and only happened to use your home as a shortcut. I do not mean to intrude, and I certainly do not mean to be a cat’s dinner.”

“I - I understand that,” said Alice, blushing. “As I seem to have delayed you, what if I - I carry you in my pocket and take you where you need to go. Surely that would be faster than running to wherever you’re going.”

“Yes, yes indeed, you may have a point there. Well, so it shall be. Take me to the lake.”

“The lake?”

“The silver lake, girl! On the grounds!”

“On the - in the park! Oh, yes, certainly. Oh, I may get into trouble if they see me simply walking out. I -”

“You continue to delay me.”

“Oh, yes, yes, I am sorry. Um, very well, then, I will - we will climb down this window. Yes, that should be fine.”

Alice struggled to make a rope out of her bedsheets and opened her window to the autumn night, as the mouse kept looking at his little wristwatch, and tapping his foot.

Alice cupped her hands and extended them to him, and he sat quite comfortably in her hands. However, it was difficult to put him in her pocket without struggling and his feeling offended.

She climbed down the rope, muttering “my, oh my” as she slipped and her hands burned and her feet didn’t quite know what to do. Mr. Mouse, for his part, seemed to be muttering something about the height, and stops and starts.

She finally got down, and began to walk. She was really a little afraid, having never been out at these hours, and on her own, no less! But her curiosity, and need to be polite, were greater than her fear. Either way, the leaves of the trees, all rust and gold, glowed beautifully in the moonlight. She quietly, oh so quietly, opened the gate and crossed the road.

“Oh, my, oh my,” she continued to mumble, now arriving at the park. “The silver lake, the silver lake. Well, there’s a pond, but he must not mean this.”

“Time is ticking away, girl.”

“Oh, yes, yes, don’t remind me,” she said impatiently. “Oh, I mean, I’m sorry. Is this - is this the silver lake?” she asked, as they approached the pond, shining, well, gold, because of the moon, the pond surrounded by dark leafy plants, and small flowers in pale colors.

“Yes, yes, girl, now get me down.”

She carefully took him out of her pocket, and when she set him down, he ran towards a rock and pushed a button.
“A button?” she said, quietly.

Just then, a long silver ladder with glass rungs slowly dropped down from the moon.

“Oh, my. May I - may I go with you?”

“Do as you like, just stop delaying me!”

She began to climb the ladder, the delicate glass rungs each seemingly a window into different places. “Is that London? The horizon, oh, yes! That’s Big Ben... Ooh! This is! I believe this is in Egypt. The - I know the pyramids!... Oh, I don’t know this one, but it’s so very green and the trees are so high. It looks like a jungle?”

She saw many, many more places. Beaches with the sky flashing green, snowy mountaintops, endless white sand deserts. It was all very beautiful, but she was beginning to grow tired. She wondered if she should look down. How high had she gone?

Oh, but here was the moon, she realized, looking up.

She finished climbing and stepped onto the moon. “Oh, Mr. Mouse?” she called out. “Mr. Mouse?” but he was nowhere to be found.

“Mouse?” she heard a grey owl say as it flew near her.

“Do you know Mr. Mouse?”

“Oh, yes, I know plenty of mice. Where has this one gone?”

“I - I’m sure I don’t know. Oh, you see, he rushed off before I even finished climbing up the ladder!”

The owl seemed angry at her and harrumphed a few times. “Well, no matter. We shall have to visit the lunar maria.”

“The lunar what?”

“The oceans, dear child!” said the owl, flying off. She chased after him. Oh, how exciting to see the ocean on the moon! Would it be icy blue and raging? Or perhaps lavender and still as glass? “Well, here we are!”

“Oh, but this is nothing of the kind,” she said, disappointed at seeing the dark black plains that were the lunar maria. It certainly looked like an ocean - an ocean that had been frozen into rock. She walked on it, crouched down to feel the smooth, cool surface.

She was excited to see who else she would meet. She remembered her governess, Miss Liddell, telling her of the Great Moon Hoax: a reporter had claimed to see goats and unicorns and winged humans on the moon. They called it a hoax because no one else managed to see it all through a telescope, but Alice felt this was a silly reason to call something a lie. The unicorns and goats could have migrated to the other side of the moon, and the winged humans might have been busy flying over the oceans and beaches of the moon.

Thinking this, she glanced around, hoping to see another beach or ocean. Instead, there was a vast expanse of white, rocky, cratered ground. She looked up at the sky - so full of stars, and the Earth. The Earth was massive and blue, and so dark and so calm.

She stared at it for a long time, before a thought occurred to her.
How was she not floating upside down? Surely she was at the bottom of the moon, was she not? Or perhaps she was floating and she simply hadn’t noticed. Was her hair above her head? She reached up to undo her hair, when a white salamander with wire rim glasses ran between her feet.

“Oh! Oh, hello! Mr. Salamander! Can you tell me if we are upside down?”

The salamander stumbled to a stop and looked at her. “I have not considered that question. Upside down from what? Which is up and which is down?”

“Well, I -”

“I shall have to create a new invention. Something to tell us which way is up, and which is down. A wind turbine and an hourglass.”

Alice nodded, and waited for him to stop daydreaming. After a few minutes, he finally spoke again.

“And perhaps I will bring my previous invention, that figures out people’s names.”

“Oh, I’m sorry for not introducing myself first. My name is Alice. Though I’m sure your invention would have found my name out instantly!”

“It may have. Certainly it would have known it was something with a B, if not an A.”

“Yes. And, well, if we’re upside down, then my feet are up - but then my dress would rise - or fall. And as that doesn’t seem to be happening, surely I am not upside down.”

“I have climbed all around the moon, my feet forming suction cups so I will cling to the ground. But I have no dress that would rise - or fall. So I may still be upside down.”

“Mm, yes, quite,” said Alice, pondering the problem. “I believe that since the earth is up above us, we must be upside down.”

“How shall we test it, dear Alice? Perhaps if I let my feet stop suctioning, I may float away into space and then we shall know!”

“Oh, surely I’ll be able to catch you!”

“Even if you do not, I should fall - or float up - to earth and all would be well.”

“Would it?” asked Alice, trying to make sense of this.

“Oh, yes, yes, dear Alice, absolutely. If I should float up to where you should be able to catch me, then we are indeed upside down.”

“Indeed.”

Alice stayed still and waited for the little salamander to do something.

“I am afraid.”

“Oh, you are?”

“No, I am not.”

“Surely not... Would you tell my inventions, if I am unable to return to them - would you tell them that they must keep themselves oiled, and that I loved them very much and they must find
someone to use them regularly.”

"Certainly."

The silence settled again, and Alice began to grow impatient. Really, as long as she wasn’t upside down, it didn’t much affect her if the salamander was. She couldn’t very well say this, so instead she found a rock to sit on.

“Oh, my, what is that?!” shouted Alice, springing up from her seat.

“Oh, what?” asked Mr. Salamander, who’d finally found enough bravery to release one foot into the air.

“That is a baby unicorn! Oh, I knew there were unicorns on the moon! And it’s with - oh, I don’t know what that animal is, but it is beautiful, too!”

The unicorn and its companion approached Alice, head held high, walk regal.

Mr. Salamander got up on his rear legs and began to bow, “Oh, dear Princes Larry the Unicorn and Alfie the Alpaca! What an honor to see you! What an honor to breathe the same air as you, truly!”

Alice curtsied, completely unsure if it was appropriate of Mr. Salamander to have addressed the princes first.

The unicorn turned its pale lilac eyes to Mr. Salamander, and bowed its head slightly, the long white hair gleaming as it moved.

“Oh! You are not upside down, either!” said Alice.

The unicorn turned to look at her.

“Oh, I’m sorry, I should have waited for you to speak first, but - but Mr. Salamander and I are trying to - to ascertain which way is up, and which is down. And, well, we don’t know yet, but we know I’m certainly not upside down, as my dress is not lifting - or falling - and you certainly aren’t, as your hair is not lifting. Or falling.”

“How were you to test this?” asked Prince Alfie, excitedly.

“Well, once I released myself, if I was upside down, and began to float up - or down, then -” said Mr. Salamander. “Then we’d analyze the data and determine that - that maybe we are upside down.”

“Very well, do it now,” said Prince Larry.

“Oh, oh, yes, dear prince, I shall, I shall, but, but -” said Mr. Salamander, shaking.

“Are you afraid?” asked the prince, not unkindly.

“I - a little,” he admitted sheepishly.

“I shall protect you,” said Prince Larry, shaking his head, pushing his chest out. “Whatever happens, I will catch you.”

“I - I...”

“Oh, surely you trust the prince!” exclaimed Alice.
“Yes, yes, indeed I do,” said the little salamander, now letting go. And oh! He began to float up!

“Oh, my!” said Mr. Salamander, clinging to Prince Larry’s horn as he began to float away.

Alice noticed her dress was now falling up, and Prince Larry’s hair was floating, too! She apologized as she wrapped her arms around Prince Alfie’s neck, as he began to float up.

He smelled of brown sugar - delicious, warm brown sugar, the way her mother smelled, and he felt warm and smooth and warm and -

Alice opened her eyes, to find her mother stroking her hair.

“Oh, mother, I just had the most wonderful adventure! I can’t wait to tell Miss Liddell!”

“I’m glad, my dear, and I hope you will, after you get into bed. Come along now.”

“Yes, yes, but first I will say goodnight to that wonderful moon, won’t I? Wonderful moon.”

End Notes

Fills the "unicorn" square in Cotton Candy Bingo, and "unexpected friendship" for Trope Bingo.

The ladder scene was inspired by "Poem (To be read with Philip Glass’s String Quartet No. 5)” by Matthea Harvey.

The clumsy, kind, daydreaming, sentimental and creative Mr. Salamander is based on the White Knight of Through the Looking Glass (and, thus, based on Lewis Carroll himself).

Miss Liddell is, obviously, in honor of the real Alice Liddell.

Princes Larry and Alfie were created by my best friend and I, so I thank her for that.

Oh, and the Great Moon Hoax was an actual thing.

Thank you to DWEmma for requesting this and asking me to make fun of scientific thought!

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