



Cambridge IGCSE™ (9–1)

DRAMA

0994/12

Paper 1

May/June 2025

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL



Centres should download this material from the School Support Hub and give it to candidates.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the **two** play extracts provided in this booklet.
- You may do any appropriate preparatory work. It is recommended that you explore both extracts as practical theatre, investigating performance and staging opportunities.
- You will **not** be allowed to take this copy of the material **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.
- A copy of the pre-release material will be provided with the question paper.

This document has **28** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

EXTRACT 1

Adapted from *The Odd Couple* by Neil Simon

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Extract 1 is taken from Neil Simon's play *The Odd Couple*, which was first performed in 1965 in New York City. The play is in three Acts and the extract is taken from the opening of Act 2.

Felix Ungar is a highly-strung journalist who has recently separated from his wife. He has moved in temporarily with his friend Oscar Madison, who is a sportswriter. Felix is obsessively neat and tidy, whereas Oscar is a slob who makes no attempt to keep his apartment tidy. At the start of the play, Oscar's apartment is filthy and poorly kept.

Their lifestyles are also very different. Oscar is divorced and is reckless in his use of money but nevertheless wants to enjoy life. Felix, on the other hand, is less relaxed and gets hung up on detail and trying to make everything perfect.

In Act 1, we have been introduced to a group of friends who meet regularly at Oscar's apartment to play cards and drink. They create considerable mess as they eat, drink and play.

Act 2 takes place two weeks after Act 1 has finished. By now, Felix has performed a makeover on the apartment, so it is well-kept and fresh. In so doing, he has begun to thoroughly annoy Oscar.

CHARACTERS

OSCAR MADISON (*A divorced sports journalist; a slob*)

FELIX UNGAR (*A neurotic journalist; separated from his wife*)

MURRAY (*A New York policeman; plays cards with Felix and Oscar*)

SPEED (*Another card player; often grumpy and mocking of the others*)

VINNIE (*Another card player; easy-going and often picked on as a result*)

ROY (*Another card player; has a dry sense of humour*)

CECILY PIGEON (*British. A divorcee; sister to Gwendolyn*)

GWENDOLYN PIGEON (*British. A widow; sister to Cecily*)

The action of the play takes place in Oscar Madison's apartment in Riverside Drive, Manhattan.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

[TIME: *Two weeks later. About 11.00 P.M.*

It is late in the evening and a card game is in session again. VINNIE, ROY, SPEED, MURRAY and OSCAR are all seated at the table. FELIX's chair is empty. The room is immaculately clean. No, not clean. Sterile! Spotless! Not a speck of dirt can be seen under the ten coats of polish that have been applied in the last two weeks. No laundry bags, no dirty dishes, no half-filled glasses. Suddenly FELIX appears from the kitchen. He carries a tray with glasses and food and napkins. After putting the tray down, he takes the napkins one at a time, flicks them out to full length and hands one to every player. They take them with grumbling and put them on their laps. FELIX picks up a can and very carefully pours it into a tall glass, measuring it perfectly so that not a drop spills or overflows. With a flourish he puts the can down.] 5

FELIX: [Moves to MURRAY.] ... An ice-cold drink for Murray.
 MURRAY: [He reaches up for it.] Thank you, Felix. 15
 FELIX: [Holds glass back.] Where's your coaster?
 MURRAY: My what?
 FELIX: Your coaster. The little round thing that goes under the glass. Always try to use your coasters, fellows. [He picks up another drink from the tray and hands it to SPEED.] I hate to be a pest, but you know what wet glasses do? [Goes back to the tray and picks up and wipes a clean coaster.] 20
 OSCAR: [Coldly and deliberately.] They-leave-little-rings-on-the-table.
 FELIX: [Nods.] Ruins the finish. Eats right through the polish.
 OSCAR: [To OTHERS.] So let's watch those little rings, huh?
 FELIX: [Takes ashtray and plate with a sandwich from tray and crosses to table.] 25
 And we have a clean ashtray for Roy. ... [Handing ROY ashtray.] Aaaaand ... a sandwich for Vinnie. [Like a doting headwaiter, he skilfully places the sandwich in front of VINNIE.]
 VINNIE: [Looks at FELIX, then at sandwich.] Gee, it smells good. What is it?
 FELIX: Bacon, lettuce and tomato with mayonnaise on pumpernickel toast. 30
 VINNIE: [Unbelievably.] Where'd you get it?
 FELIX: [Puzzled.] I made it. In the kitchen.
 VINNIE: You mean you put in toast and cooked bacon? Just for me?
 OSCAR: If you don't like it, he'll make you a meat loaf. Takes him five minutes.
 FELIX: It's no trouble. Honest. I love to cook. ... Try to eat over the dish. I just 35
 vacuumed the rug. [Goes back to the tray, stops.] Oscar!
 OSCAR: [Quickly.] Yes, sir?
 FELIX: I forgot what you wanted. What did you ask me for?
 OSCAR: Two three-and-a-half minute eggs and some petit fours.
 FELIX: [Points to him.] A double gin and tonic. I'll be right back. ... [FELIX starts out, then stops at a little box on the bar.] 40
 Who turned off the air purifier?
 MURRAY: The what?
 FELIX: The air purifier! [He snaps it back on.] Don't play with this, fellows. I'm trying to get some of the grime out of the air.
 [He looks at them and shakes his head disapprovingly, and exits. They ALL sit in silence a few seconds.] 45

OSCAR: Murray—I'll give you two hundred dollars for your gun.

SPEED: [Throws his cards on table and gets up angrily.] I can't take it any more. [Hand on neck.] I've had it up to here. In the last three hours we played cards for just four minutes. I'm not giving up my Friday nights to watch cooking and housekeeping. 50

ROY: [Slumped in his chair, head hanging down.] I can't breathe. [Points to air purifier.] That lousy machine is sucking everything out of the air.

VINNIE: [Chewing.] Gee, this is delicious. Who wants a bite?

MURRAY: Is the toast warm? 55

VINNIE: Perfect. And not too much mayonnaise. It's really a well-made sandwich.

MURRAY: Cut me off a little piece.

VINNIE: Give me your napkin. I don't want to drop any crumbs.

SPEED: [Watches them, horrified, as VINNIE carefully breaks sandwich over MURRAY's napkin. Then turns to OSCAR.] Are you listening to this? 60

ROY: [Still choking.] I'm telling you that thing could kill us. They'll find us here in the morning with our tongues on the floor.

SPEED: [Yells at OSCAR.] Do something! Get him back in the game.

OSCAR: [Rises, containing his anger.] Don't bother me with your petty little problems. You get this one stinkin' night a week. I'm cooped up here with Mary Poppins twenty-four hours a day. [Moves to window.] 65

ROY: It was better before. With the garbage and the smoke, it was better before.

VINNIE: [To MURRAY.] Did you notice what he does with the bread?

MURRAY: What? 70

VINNIE: He cuts off the crusts. That's why the sandwich is so light.

MURRAY: And then he only uses the soft, green part of the lettuce. [Chewing.] It's really delicious.

SPEED: [Reacts in amazement and disgust.] I'm going out of my mind.

OSCAR: [Yells towards kitchen.] Felix! ... Damn it, FELIX! 75

SPEED: Forget it. I'm going home.

OSCAR: Sit down!

SPEED: I'll buy a book and start to read again.

OSCAR: Siddown! Will you siddown! [Yells.] Felix!

SPEED: Oscar, it's all over. The day his marriage busted up was the end of our card game. [Takes his jacket from back of chair and crosses to door.] If you find some real players next week, call me. 80

OSCAR: [Following him.] You can't run out now. I've lost.

SPEED: [With door open.] You got no one to blame but yourself. It's all your fault. You're the one who stopped him from killing himself. [He exits and slams door.] 85

OSCAR: [Stares at door.] He's right! ... The man is absolutely right. [Moves to table.]

MURRAY: [To VINNIE.] Are you going to eat that pickle?

VINNIE: I wasn't thinking of it. Why? Do you want it?

MURRAY: Unless you want it. It's your pickle. 90

VINNIE: No, no. Take it. I don't usually eat pickle.

[VINNIE holds plate with pickle out to MURRAY. OSCAR slaps the plate which sends the pickle flying through the air.]

OSCAR: Deal the cards!

MURRAY: What did you do that for? 95

OSCAR: Just deal the cards! You want to eat, go to Schrafft's. [To VINNIE.] Keep your sandwich and your pickles to yourself ... Everybody's getting fat. [He screams.] Felix. ...

[FELIX appears in the kitchen doorway.]

FELIX:	What?	100
OSCAR:	Close the kitchen and sit down. It's a quarter to twelve. We've still got an hour and a half to play.	
ROY:	[<i>Sniffs.</i>] What is that smell? Disinfectant! [<i>He smells cards.</i>] It's the cards. <i>He washed the cards!</i> [<i>Throws down cards, takes jacket from chair and moves above table.</i>]	105
FELIX:	[<i>Comes to table with OSCAR's drink, which he puts down, and then sits in his own seat.</i>] Okay ...	
OSCAR:	[<i>Hurrying to his seat.</i>] I can't believe it. We're gonna play cards again. [<i>He sits.</i>] It's up to Roy. ... Roy, baby, what are you gonna do?	
ROY:	I'm going to get in a cab and go to Central Park. If I don't get some fresh air, you got yourself a dead accountant. [<i>Moves towards door.</i>]	110
OSCAR:	[<i>Follows him.</i>] What do you mean? It's not even twelve o'clock.	
ROY:	[<i>Turns back to OSCAR.</i>] Look, I've been sitting here breathing disinfectant for four hours! ... Nature didn't intend for cards to be played like that. [<i>He crosses to door.</i>] If you wanna have a game next week ... [<i>He points to FELIX.</i>] either Louis Pasteur cleans up <i>after</i> we've gone ... or we play somewhere else. Good night! [<i>He goes and slams door.</i>]	115
	[<i>There is a moment's silence. OSCAR goes back to table and sits.</i>]	
FELIX:	Gee, I'm sorry. Is it my fault?	
VINNIE:	No, I guess no one feels like playing much lately.	120
MURRAY:	Yeah. I don't know what it is, but something's happening to the old gang. [<i>Goes to side chair, sits, and puts on shoes.</i>]	
OSCAR:	Don't you know what's happening to the old gang? It's breaking up. Everyone's getting divorced. ... I swear, we used to have better games when we couldn't get out at night.	125
VINNIE:	[<i>Getting up and putting on jacket.</i>] Well—I guess I'll be going, too. Bebe and I are driving to Asbury Park for the weekend.	
FELIX:	Just the two of you, heh? Gee, that's nice! ... You always do things like that together, don't you?	
VINNIE:	[<i>Shrugs.</i>] We have to. I don't know how to drive! ... [<i>Moves to door.</i>] You coming, Murray?	130
MURRAY:	[<i>Gets up, takes jacket and moves towards door.</i>] Yeah, why not? If I'm not home by one o'clock with a hero sandwich and a frozen eclair, she'll have the police out on me. ... Ahhh, you guys got the life.	
FELIX:	Who?	135
MURRAY:	[<i>Turns back.</i>] Who? ... You! The Marx Brothers! Laugh laugh laugh. What have you got to worry about? C'mon, Vinnie.	
	[<i>VINNIE waves goodbye and they both exit.</i>]	
FELIX:	[<i>Staring at door.</i>] That's funny, isn't it, Oscar? ... They think we're happy. ... They really think we're enjoying this. ... [<i>Gets up and begins to straighten up chairs.</i>] They don't know, Oscar. They don't know what it's like.	140
	That's funny. You know I haven't even <i>thought</i> about women in weeks.	
OSCAR:	I fail to see the humour.	
FELIX:	[<i>Stops.</i>] No, that's really strange. I mean when Frances and I were happy I don't think there was a girl on the street I didn't stare at for ten minutes. [<i>Crosses to Up Left kitchen door, pushes it open with back.</i>] I used to take the wrong subway home just following a pair of legs. ... But since we broke up, I don't even know what a woman looks like. [<i>Takes chairs into kitchen.</i>]	145
OSCAR:	Well, ... I could make a phone call.	
FELIX:	[<i>From the kitchen, as he washes dishes.</i>] What are you saying?	150

OSCAR: [*Crosses to cigar box on small table Down Right and takes cigar.*] I'm saying let's spend one night talking to someone with higher voices than us.

FELIX: You mean go out on a date?

OSCAR: Ya ...

FELIX: Oh, well, I—I can't. 155

OSCAR: Why not?

FELIX: Well, it's all right for you. But I'm still married.

OSCAR: [*Paces towards kitchen door.*] You can *cheat* until the divorce comes through!

FELIX: It's not that. It's just that ... I have no—no *feeling* for it. I can't explain it. 160

OSCAR: Try!

FELIX: [*Comes to doorway with brush and dish in hand.*] Listen, I intend to go out. I get lonely too. But I'm just separated a few weeks. Give me a little time. [*Goes back to sink.*]

OSCAR: There isn't any time left. I saw TV Guide and there's nothing on this week! 165
[*Paces into and through kitchen and out kitchen door on landing to Down Right.*] What am I asking you? All I want to do is have dinner with a couple of girls. You just have to eat and talk. It's not hard. You've eaten and talked before.

FELIX: [*In kitchen.*] Why do you need me? Can't you go out yourself? 170

OSCAR: Because I may want to come back here. And if we walk in and find you washing the windows, it puts a damper on things. [*Sits Down Right.*]

FELIX: [*Pokes head out of kitchen.*] I'll take a pill and go to sleep. [*Back into kitchen.*]

OSCAR: Why take a pill when you can have female company? 175

FELIX: [*Comes out with aerosol held high above his head, and circles the room spraying it.*] Because I'd feel guilty, that's why. Maybe it doesn't make any sense to you, but that's the way I feel. [*Puts aerosol on table and takes silent butler and rag into kitchen. Places them on sink and busily begins to wipe refrigerator.*] 180

OSCAR: Look, for all I care you can take her in the kitchen and make a blueberry pie. But I think it's a lot healthier than sitting up in your bed every night writing Frances' name all through the crossword puzzles. ... Just for one night, talk to another girl.

FELIX: [*Pushes love seat carefully in position Down Right and sits; weakening.*] 185
But—who would I call? The only single girl I know is my secretary and I don't think she likes me.

OSCAR: [*Jumps up and crouches next to FELIX.*] Leave that to me. There's two sisters who live in this building. English girls. One's a widow, the other's a divorcee. They're a barrel of laughs. 190

FELIX: How do you know?

OSCAR: I was trapped in the elevator with them last week. [*Runs to telephone table, puts directory on floor, and gets down on knees to look for number.*] I've been meaning to call them but I didn't know which one to take out. This'll be perfect. 195

FELIX: What do they look like?

OSCAR: Don't worry. Yours is very pretty.

FELIX: I'm not worried. ... Which one is mine?

OSCAR: The divorcee. [*Looking in book.*]

FELIX: [*Goes to OSCAR.*] Why do I get the divorcee? 200

OSCAR: I don't care. You want the widow? [*Circles number on page with crayon.*]

FELIX: [*Sitting on couch.*] No, I don't want the widow. I don't even want the divorcee. I'm just doing this for you.

OSCAR: Look, take whoever you want. When they come in the door, point to the sister of your choice. [*Tears page out of the book, runs to bookcase and hangs it up.*] I don't care. I just want to have some laughs. 205

FELIX: All right. All right.
 OSCAR: [*Crosses to couch, sits next to FELIX.*] Don't say all right. I want you to promise me you're going to try to have a good time. Please, Felix. It's important. Say I promise. 210

FELIX: [*Nods.*] I promise.
 OSCAR: Again!
 FELIX: I promise!
 OSCAR: And no writing in the book, a dollar thirty for the cab.
 FELIX: No writing in the book. 215
 OSCAR: No one is to be called Frances. It's Gwendolyn and Cecily.
 FELIX: No Frances.
 OSCAR: No crying, sighing, moaning or groaning.
 FELIX: I'll smile from seven to twelve.
 OSCAR: And this above all, no talk of the past. Only the present. 220
 FELIX: And the future.
 OSCAR: That's the new Felix I've been waiting for. [*Leaps up and prances right.*] Oh, this is going to be a night. ... Hey, where do you want to go?
 FELIX: For what?
 OSCAR: For dinner. Where'll we eat? 225
 FELIX: You mean a restaurant? For the four of us? It'll cost a fortune.
 OSCAR: We'll cut down on laundry. We don't wear socks on Thursdays.
 FELIX: But that's throwing away money. We can't afford it, Oscar.
 OSCAR: We have to eat.
 FELIX: [*Moves to OSCAR.*] We'll have dinner here. 230
 OSCAR: *Here?*
 FELIX: I'll cook. We'll save thirty, forty dollars. [*He goes to couch, sits, and picks up phone.*]
 OSCAR: What kind of a double date is that? You'll be in the kitchen all night.
 FELIX: No, I won't. I'll put it up in the afternoon. Once I get my potatoes in, I'll have all the time in the world. [*He starts to dial.*] 235
 OSCAR: [*Pacing back and forth.*] What happened to the new Felix? ... Who are you calling?
 FELIX: Frances. I want to get her recipe for London broil. The girls'll be crazy about it. 240

[*He dials as OSCAR storms off towards his bedroom.*]

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

[*TIME: A few days later. About 8 o'clock.*]

No one is on Stage. The dining table looks like a page out of House and Garden magazine. It's set up for dinner for four, complete with linen tablecloth, candles and wine glasses. There is a floral centrepiece and flowers about the room, and crackers and dip on the coffee table. There are sounds of activity in the kitchen. The front door opens and OSCAR enters with a bottle of wine in a brown paper bag, and his jacket over his arm. 245

OSCAR: [*Calls out. In a playful mood.*] I'm home, dear! [*He goes into his bedroom, taking off his shirt, and comes skipping out shaving with a cordless razor, and with a clean shirt and a tie over his arm.*] Beautiful! Just beautiful! 250

	[<i>He sniffs, obviously catching the aroma from the kitchen.</i>] Oh, yeah. Something wonderful is going on in that kitchen. ... [<i>He rubs hands gleefully.</i>] No, sir. There's no doubt about it. I'm the luckiest man on earth. [<i>Puts razor into his pocket, and begins to put on shirt. FELIX enters slowly from the kitchen. He's wearing a small dish towel as an apron. He has a ladle in one hand. He looks silently and glumly at OSCAR, crosses to the armchair and sits. FELIX just stares straight ahead.</i>] Felix? ... What's the matter? Something's wrong. I can tell by your conversation. [<i>Goes into bathroom, gets bottle of after shave lotion, comes out and puts it on.</i>] All right, Felix, what is it?	255
FELIX:	[<i>Without looking at him.</i>] What is it? Let's start with what time do you think it is?	265
OSCAR:	What time? I don't know. Seven-thirty?	
FELIX:	Seven-thirty? Try eight o'clock.	
OSCAR:	[<i>Puts lotion down on small table.</i>] All right, so it's eight o'clock. So? [<i>Begins to fix tie.</i>]	
FELIX:	So? ... You said you'd be home at seven.	270
OSCAR:	Is that what I said?	
FELIX:	[<i>Nods.</i>] That's what you said. "I will be home at seven" is what you said.	
OSCAR:	Okay, I said I'd be home at seven. And it's eight. So what's the problem?	
FELIX:	If you knew you were going to be late, why didn't you call me?	
OSCAR:	[<i>Pauses while fixing tie.</i>] I couldn't call you. I was busy.	275
FELIX:	Too busy to pick up a phone? ... Where were you?	
OSCAR:	I was in the office, working.	
FELIX:	[<i>Moves Down Left.</i>] Working? Ha!	
OSCAR:	Yes. Working!	
FELIX:	I called your office at seven o'clock. You were gone.	280
OSCAR:	[<i>Tucking in shirt.</i>] It took me an hour to get home. I couldn't get a cab.	
FELIX:	Since when do they have cabs in Hannigan's bar?	
OSCAR:	Wait a minute. I want to get this down on a tape recorder ... because no one'll believe me! ... You mean now I have to call you if I'm coming home late for dinner?	285
FELIX:	[<i>Crosses to OSCAR.</i>] Not <i>any</i> dinner. Just the ones I've been slaving over since two o'clock this afternoon ... to help save <i>you</i> money to pay your wife's alimony.	
OSCAR:	[<i>Controlling himself.</i>] Felix ... this is no time to have a domestic quarrel. We have two girls coming down any minute.	290
FELIX:	You mean you told them to be here at eight o'clock?	
OSCAR:	[<i>Takes jacket and crosses to couch. Sits and takes some dip from coffee table.</i>] I don't remember what I said. Seven-thirty, eight o'clock. What difference does it make?	
FELIX:	[<i>Follows OSCAR.</i>] I'll tell you what difference. You told me they were coming at seven-thirty. You were going to be here at seven to help me with the hors d'oeuvres. At seven-thirty they arrive and we have cocktails. At eight o'clock we have dinner. It is now eight o'clock. <i>My-London-broil-is-finished!</i> If we don't eat now the whole damned thing'll be <i>dried out!</i>	295
OSCAR:	Heaven help me!	300
FELIX:	Never mind helping <i>you</i> . Tell heaven to save the meat. Because we got nine dollars and thirty-four cents worth drying up in there right now.	
OSCAR:	Can't you keep it warm?	
FELIX:	[<i>Paces Right.</i>] What do you think I am, the Magic Chef? I'm lucky I got it to come out at eight o'clock. What am I going to do?	305
OSCAR:	I don't know. Keep pouring gravy on it.	
FELIX:	What gravy?	
OSCAR:	Don't you have any gravy?	

- FELIX: [Storms over to OSCAR.] Where the hell am I going to get gravy at eight o'clock? 310
- OSCAR: [To no one in particular.] Listen to me. I'm arguing with him over gravy.
- [The Bell rings.]
- FELIX: [Jumps up.] Well, they're here. Our dinner guests. I'll get a saw and cut the meat. [Starts for kitchen.]
- OSCAR: [Stopping him.] Stay where you are! 315
- FELIX: I'm not taking the blame for this dinner.
- OSCAR: Who's blaming you? Who even cares about the dinner?
- FELIX: [Moves to OSCAR.] I care. I take pride in what I do. And you're going to explain to them exactly what happened.
- OSCAR: All right, you can take a Polaroid picture of me coming in at eight o'clock! ... Now take off that stupid apron because I'm opening the door. [Rips the towel off FELIX and goes to the door.] 320
- FELIX: [Takes jacket from dining chair and puts it on.] I just want to get one thing clear. This is the last time I ever cook for you. Because people like you don't even appreciate a decent meal. That's why they have T.V. dinners. 325
- OSCAR: You through?
- FELIX: I'm through!
- OSCAR: Then smile. [OSCAR smiles and opens the door. The GIRLS poke their heads through the door. They are both in their young thirties and somewhat attractive. They are undoubtedly British.] Well, hello. 330
- GWENDOLYN: [To OSCAR.] Hallo!
- CECILY: [To OSCAR.] Hallo!
- GWENDOLYN: I do hope we're not late.
- OSCAR: No, no. You timed it perfectly. Come on in. [He points to them as they enter.] Er, Felix, I'd like you to meet two very good friends of mine, Gwendolyn and Cecily— 335
- CECILY: [Pointing out his mistake.] Cecily and Gwendolyn.
- OSCAR: Oh, yes. Cecily and Gwendolyn ... er ... [Trying to remember their last name.] Er ... Don't tell me ... Robin? ... No, no ... Cardinal?
- GWENDOLYN: Wrong both times. It's Pigeon! 340
- OSCAR: Pigeon. Right. Cecily and Gwendolyn Pigeon.
- GWENDOLYN: [To FELIX.] You don't spell it like Walter Pidgeon. You spell it like "Coo Coo" Pigeon.
- OSCAR: We'll remember that if it comes up. ... Cecily and Gwendolyn, I'd like you to meet my room-mate ... and our chef for the evening ... Felix Ungar. 345
- CECILY: [Holding hand out.] How do you dooo?
- FELIX: [Moving to her and shaking her hand.] How do you do?
- GWENDOLYN: [Holding hand out.] How do you dooo?
- FELIX: [Stepping up on landing and shaking her hand.] How do you do?
- [This puts him nose to nose with OSCAR, and there is an awkward pause as they look at each other.] 350
- OSCAR: Well we did that beautifully. ... Why don't we sit down and make ourselves comfortable?
- [FELIX steps aside and ushers the GIRLS down into the room. There is ad-libbing and a bit of confusion and milling about as they ALL squeeze between the armchair and the couch, and the PIGEONS finally seat themselves on the couch. OSCAR sits in the armchair, and FELIX sneaks past him to the love seat. Finally ALL have settled down.] 355

CECILY:	This is ever so nice, isn't it, Gwen?	
GWENDOLYN:	[<i>Looking around.</i>] Lovely. And much nicer than our flat. Do you have help?	360
OSCAR:	Er, yes. I have a man who comes in every night.	
CECILY:	Aren't you the lucky one?	
	[CECILY, GWENDOLYN and OSCAR all laugh. OSCAR looks over at FELIX but there is no response.]	
OSCAR:	[<i>Rubs hands together.</i>] Well, isn't this nice? ... I was telling Felix yesterday about how we happened to meet.	365
GWENDOLYN:	Oh? Who's Felix?	
OSCAR:	[<i>A little embarrassed. Points to FELIX.</i>] He is!	
GWENDOLYN:	Oh, yes, of course. I'm so sorry.	
	[FELIX nods that it's all right.]	370
CECILY:	You know it happened to us again this morning.	
OSCAR:	What did?	
GWENDOLYN:	Stuck in the elevator again.	
OSCAR:	Really? Just the two of you?	
CECILY:	And poor old Mr Kessler from the third floor. We were in there half an hour.	375
OSCAR:	No kidding? What happened?	
GWENDOLYN:	Nothing much I'm afraid.	
	[CECILY and GWENDOLYN both laugh again, joined by OSCAR. He once again looks over at FELIX but there is no response. They continue to stare at FELIX.]	380
FELIX:	[<i>Jumps up and, picking up ladle, starts for the kitchen.</i>] Dinner is served!	
OSCAR:	[<i>Stopping him.</i>] No, it isn't!	
FELIX:	Yes, it is!	
OSCAR:	No, it isn't! I'm sure the girls would like a drink first. [<i>To GIRLS.</i>] Wouldn't you, girls?	385
GWENDOLYN:	Well, I wouldn't put up a struggle.	
OSCAR:	There you are. [<i>To CECILY.</i>] What would you like?	
CECILY:	Oh, I really don't know. [<i>To OSCAR.</i>] What have you got?	
FELIX:	London broil.	
OSCAR:	[<i>To FELIX.</i>] She means to drink. [<i>To CECILY.</i>] We have everything. And what we don't have, I mix. What'll it be? [<i>Crouches next to her.</i>]	390
CECILY:	Oh ... a cocktail.	
	[OSCAR goes to bar and mixes drinks.]	
FELIX:	[<i>Going to him.</i>] Where are you going?	
OSCAR:	To get the refreshments. [<i>He exits into the kitchen.</i>]	395
FELIX:	[<i>Calls after him.</i>] Don't forget to look at my meat! [<i>He turns and faces the GIRLS. He crosses to chair and sits. He crosses his legs nonchalantly. But he is ill at ease and he crosses them again. He is becoming aware of the silence and he can no longer get away with just smiling.</i>] Er ... Oscar tells me you're sisters.	400
CECILY:	Yes. That's right. [<i>She looks at GWENDOLYN.</i>]	
FELIX:	From England.	
GWENDOLYN:	Yes. That's right. [<i>She looks at CECILY.</i>]	
FELIX:	I see. [<i>Silence. Then, his little joke.</i>] We're not brothers.	
CECILY:	Yes. We know.	405

- FELIX: Although I am a brother. I have a brother who's a doctor. He lives in Buffalo. That's upstate in New York.
- GWENDOLYN: Yes. We know.
- FELIX: You know my brother?
- GWENDOLYN: No. We know that Buffalo is upstate in New York. 410
- CECILY: We've been there! ... Have you?
- FELIX: No! ... Is it nice?
- CECILY: Lovely.
- [*There is an awkward pause.*]
- FELIX: Isn't that interesting? ... How long have you been in the United States of America? 415
- CECILY: Almost four years now.
- FELIX: [*Nods.*] Uh-huh. ... Just visiting?
- GWENDOLYN: [*Looks at CECILY.*] No! We live here.
- FELIX: And you work here too, do you? 420
- CECILY: Yes. We're secretaries for Slenderama.
- GWENDOLYN: You know. The Health Club.
- CECILY: People bring us their bodies and we do wonderful things with them.
- GWENDOLYN: Actually, if you're interested, we can get you ten per cent off.
- CECILY: Off the price, not off your body. 425
- FELIX: Yes, I see. [*He laughs, they ALL laugh. Suddenly shouts towards kitchen.*] Oscar, where's the drinks?
- OSCAR: [*Offstage.*] Coming! Coming!
- CECILY: What field of endeavor are you engaged in?
- FELIX: I write the news for C.B.S. 430
- CECILY: Oh! Fascinating!
- GWENDOLYN: Where do you get your ideas from?
- FELIX: [*He looks at her as though she's a Martian.*] From the news.
- GWENDOLYN: Oh, yes, of course. Silly me. ...
- CECILY: Maybe you can mention Gwen and I in one of your news reports. 435
- FELIX: Well, if you do something spectacular, maybe I will.
- CECILY: Oh, we've done spectacular things but I don't think we'd want it spread all over the Telly, do you, Gwen?
- [*They both laugh.*]
- FELIX: [*He laughs too, then cries out almost for help.*] Oscar! 440
- OSCAR: [*Offstage.*] Yeah yeah!
- FELIX: [*To GIRLS.*] It's such a large apartment, sometimes you have to shout.
- GWENDOLYN: Just you two baches live here?
- FELIX: Baches? Oh, bachelors! We're not bachelors. We're divorced. That is, Oscar's divorced. I'm *getting* divorced. 445
- CECILY: Oh. Small world. We've cut the dinghy loose too, as they say.
- GWENDOLYN: Well, you couldn't have a *better* matched foursome, could you?
- FELIX: [*Smiles weakly.*] No, I suppose not.
- GWENDOLYN: Although technically, I'm a widow. I was divorcing my husband but he died before the final papers came through. 450
- FELIX: Oh, I'm awfully sorry. [*Sighs.*] It's a terrible thing, isn't it? Divorce.
- GWENDOLYN: It can be ... if you haven't got the right solicitor.
- CECILY: That's true. Sometimes they can drag it out for months. I was lucky. Snip, cut and I was free.
- FELIX: I mean it's terrible what it can do to people. After all, what is divorce? 455
It's taking two happy people and tearing their lives completely apart. It's inhuman, don't you think so?

CECILY:	Yes, it can be an awful bother.	
GWENDOLYN:	But of course, that's all water under the bridge now, eh? ... er ... I'm terribly sorry, but I think I've forgotten your name.	460
FELIX:	Felix.	
GWENDOLYN:	Oh, yes. Felix.	
CECILY:	Like the Cat.	
	[FELIX takes wallet from his jacket pocket.]	
GWENDOLYN:	Well, the Pigeons will have to beware of the cat, won't they? [She laughs.]	465
CECILY:	[Nibbles on a nut from the dish.] Mmm, cashews. Lovely.	
FELIX:	[Takes snapshot out of wallet.] This is the worst part of breaking up. [He hands picture to CECILY.]	
CECILY:	[Looks at it.] Childhood sweethearts, were you?	
FELIX:	No, no. That's my little boy and girl. [CECILY gives picture to GWENDOLYN, and takes a pair of glasses from her purse and puts them on.] He's seven, she's five.	470
CECILY:	[Looks again.] Oh! Sweet.	
FELIX:	They live with their mother.	
GWENDOLYN:	I imagine you must miss them terribly.	475
FELIX:	[Takes back picture and looks at it longingly.] I do. [Shrugs.] But—that's what happens with divorce.	
CECILY:	When do you get to see them?	
FELIX:	Every night. I stop there on my way home! ... Then I take them on the weekends and I get them on holidays and July and August.	480
CECILY:	Oh! ... Well, when is it that you miss them?	
FELIX:	Whenever I'm not there. If they didn't have to go to school so early, I'd go over and make them breakfast. They love my French toast.	
GWENDOLYN:	You're certainly a devoted father.	
FELIX:	It's Frances who's the wonderful one.	485
CECILY:	She's the little girl?	
FELIX:	No. She's the mother. My wife.	
GWENDOLYN:	The one you're divorcing?	
FELIX:	[Nods.] Mm! ... She's done a terrific job bringing them up. They always look so nice. They're so polite. Speak beautifully. Never "Yeah." Always "Yes." ... They're such good kids. And she did it all. She's the kind of woman who— Ah, what am I saying? You don't want to hear any of this. [Puts picture back in wallet.]	490
CECILY:	Nonsense. You have a right to be proud. You have two beautiful children and a wonderful ex-wife.	495
FELIX:	[Containing his emotions.] I know. I know. [He hands CECILY another snapshot.] That's her. Frances.	
GWENDOLYN:	[Looking at picture.] Oh, she's pretty. Isn't she pretty, Cecy?	
CECILY:	Oh, yes. Pretty. A pretty girl. Very pretty.	
FELIX:	[Takes picture back.] Thank you. [Shows them another snapshot.] Isn't this nice?	500
GWENDOLYN:	[Looks.] There's no one in the picture.	
FELIX:	I know. It's a picture of our living room. We had a beautiful apartment.	
GWENDOLYN:	Oh, yes. Pretty. Very pretty.	
CECILY:	Those are lovely lamps.	505
FELIX:	Thank you. [Takes picture.] We bought them in Mexico on our honeymoon ... [He looks at picture again.] I used to love to come home at night. [He's beginning to break.] My wife, my kids ... and my apartment. [He breaks down and sobs.]	
CECILY:	Does she have the lamps now, too?	510
FELIX:	[Nods.] I gave her everything. ... It'll never be like that again. ... Never!	

... I—I— [*He turns head away.*] I'm sorry. [*He takes out a handkerchief and dabs eyes.* GWENDOLYN and CECILY look at each other with compassion.] Please forgive me. I didn't mean to get emotional. [*Trying to pull himself together. He picks up bowl from side table and offers it to GIRLS.*] Would you like some potato chips? 515

[*CECILY takes the bowl.*]

GWENDOLYN: You mustn't be ashamed. I think it's a rare quality in a man to be able to cry.

FELIX: [*Hand over eyes.*] Please. Let's not talk about it. 520

CECILY: I think it's sweet. Terribly terribly sweet. [*Takes potato chip.*]

FELIX: You're just making it worse.

GWENDOLYN: [*Teary-eyed.*] It's so refreshing to hear a man speak so highly of the woman he's divorcing! ... Oh, dear. [*She takes out her handkerchief.*] Now you've got me thinking about poor Sydney. 525

CECILY: Oh Gwen. Please don't. [*Puts bowl down.*]

GWENDOLYN: It was a good marriage at first. Everyone said so. Didn't they, Cecily? Not like you and George.

CECILY: [*The past returns as she comforts GWENDOLYN.*] That's right. George and I were never happy. ... Not for one single, solitary day. [*She remembers her unhappiness and grabs her handkerchief and dabs her eyes.* ALL THREE are now sitting with handkerchiefs at their eyes.] 530

FELIX: Isn't this ridiculous?

GWENDOLYN: I don't know what brought this on. I was feeling so good a few minutes ago. 535

CECILY: I haven't cried since I was fourteen.

FELIX: Just let it pour out. It'll make you feel much better. I always do.

GWENDOLYN: Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

[*ALL THREE sit sobbing into their handkerchiefs. Suddenly OSCAR bursts happily into the room with a tray full of drinks. He is all smiles.*] 540

OSCAR: [*Like a corny M.C.*] Is ev-rybuddy happy? [*Then he sees the maudlin scene. FELIX and the GIRLS quickly try to pull themselves together.*] What the hell happened?

FELIX: Nothing! Nothing! [*He quickly puts handkerchief away.*]

OSCAR: What do you mean, nothing? I'm gone three minutes and I walk into a funeral parlor. What did you say to them? 545

FELIX: I didn't say anything. Don't start in again, Oscar.

OSCAR: I can't leave you alone for five seconds. Well, if you really want to cry, go inside and look at your London broil.

FELIX: [*He rushes madly into kitchen.*] Oh, my gosh! Why didn't you call me? I told you to call me. 550

OSCAR: [*Giving drink to CECILY.*] I'm sorry, girls. I forgot to warn you about Felix. He's a walking soap opera.

GWENDOLYN: I think he's the dearest thing I've ever met.

CECILY: [*Taking the glass.*] He's so sensitive. So fragile. I just want to bundle him up in my arms and take care of him. 555

OSCAR: [*Holds out GWENDOLYN's drink. At this, he puts it back down on tray and takes a swallow from his own drink.*] Well, I think when he comes out of that kitchen you may have to.

[*Sure enough FELIX comes out of the kitchen onto the landing looking like a wounded puppy. With a protective oven glove, he holds a pan with the exposed London broil. It is burnt black.*] 560

FELIX: [Very calmly.] I'm going down to the delicatessen. I'll be right back.
 OSCAR: [Going to him.] Wait a minute. Maybe it's not so bad. Let's see it.
 FELIX: [Shows him.] Here! Look! Nine dollars and thirty-four cents' worth of ashes! 565
 [Pulls pan away. To GIRLS.] I'll get some corned beef sandwiches.
 OSCAR: [Trying to get a look at it.] Give it to me! Maybe we can save some of it.
 FELIX: [Holding it away from OSCAR.] There's nothing to save. It's all black meat.
 Nobody likes black meat! ...
 OSCAR: Can't I even look at it? 570
 FELIX: No, you can't look at it!
 OSCAR: Why can't I look at it?
 FELIX: If you looked at your watch before you wouldn't have to look at the black
 meat now. Leave it alone! [Turns to go back into kitchen.]
 GWENDOLYN: [Going to him.] Felix ... ! Can we look at it? 575
 CECILY: [Turning to him, kneeling on couch.] Please? [FELIX stops in the doorway
 to kitchen. He hesitates for a moment. Then he turns and wordlessly holds
 pan out to them. GWENDOLYN and CECILY inspect it wordlessly, and
 then turn away sobbing quietly. To OSCAR.] How about Chinese food?
 OSCAR: A wonderful idea. 580
 GWENDOLYN: I've got a better idea. Why don't we just make pot luck in the kitchen?
 OSCAR: A much better idea.
 FELIX: I used up all the pots! [Crosses to love seat and sits, still holding the pan.]
 CECILY: Well then, we can eat up in our place. We have tons of T.V. dinners.
 OSCAR: [Gleefully.] That's the best idea I ever heard. 585
 GWENDOLYN: Of course it's awfully hot up there. You'll have to take off your jackets.
 OSCAR: [Smiling.] We can always open up a refrigerator.
 CECILY: [Gets purse from couch.] Give us five minutes to get into our cooking
 things.
 [GWENDOLYN gets purse from couch.] 590
 OSCAR: Can't you make it four? I'm suddenly starving to death.
 [The GIRLS are crossing to door.]
 GWENDOLYN: Don't forget the wine.
 OSCAR: How could I forget the wine?
 CECILY: And a corkscrew. 595
 OSCAR: And a corkscrew.
 GWENDOLYN: And Felix.
 OSCAR: No, I won't forget Felix.
 CECILY: Ta ta!
 OSCAR: Ta ta! 600
 GWENDOLYN: Ta ta!
 [The GIRLS exit.]
 OSCAR: [Throws a kiss at the closed door.] You bet your sweet little crumpets, ta
 ta! [He wheels around beaming and quickly gathers up the corkscrew from
 bar, the wine and the records.] Felix, I love you. You've just overcooked us 605
 into one heck of a night. Come on, get the ice bucket. Ready or not, here
 we come. [Runs to door.]

EXTRACT 2

Adapted from *Alice* by Laura Wade

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Alice was written by Laura Wade (b.1977) and was first performed at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, UK, in June 2010. The play is in two acts, and the extract is taken from the first part of Act Two.

The play is an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, although events do not appear in the same order and only some of the dialogue is taken from the original books. In this adapted version, the story is set in Sheffield, a large industrial city in the north of England. Alice Little is presented as a 12-year-old girl, traumatised by the death of her 17-year-old brother. At the end of the funeral wake, Alice finds herself on a surreal, topsy-turvy journey in which she enters Wonderland. Here, she encounters many familiar characters from Lewis Carroll's original story.

Towards the end of Act One, Alice finds herself on the way to the Queen of Hearts' castle, which is the location for the opening of Act 2.

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

COMMENTATOR 1
COMMENTATOR 2
DUCHESS
ALICE
QUEEN OF HEARTS
OFFICIAL
KING
HEDGEHOG
FLAMINGO
KNAVE
WHITE RABBIT

ACT TWO

[The Queen's Croquet Ground. A number of young WONDERLANDERS are playing croquet on the lawn, watched by two COMMENTATORS in their own mobile commentary box.]

ALICE sits at the edge of the lawn, with the DUCHESS next to her.]

- COMMENTATOR 1: And that cracking shot concludes our warm-up match from the Junior Wonderlanders' Croquet League. 5
- COMMENTATOR 2: Stars of the future there ...
- COMMENTATOR 1: Yes indeed. And on their way to the podium now for the medals presentation.
- COMMENTATOR 2: Who knows, one day these youngsters may find themselves being presented with a medal by the Queen herself. 10
- COMMENTATOR 1: What a proud day that would be.
- DUCHESS: Isn't it exciting, dolly?
- ALICE: What?
- DUCHESS: To be here. Today. 15
- ALICE: I um – I don't quite know how I got here.
- DUCHESS: I'm like that, I forget things all the time.
- ALICE: I mean I was just talking to that scary man and now I'm – Now I'm here. Sorry, where am I exactly?
- DUCHESS: Silly dolly. You're at the Queen's croquet ground. 20
- ALICE: The Queen of Hearts?
- DUCHESS: Aren't you more excited than you've ever been? A game of croquet and then tea.
- ALICE: I don't really know anything about croquet.
- DUCHESS: Gosh dolly, don't say that anywhere near her majesty – the Queen's mad for croquet. 25
- ALICE: Is the Queen here?
- DUCHESS: She'll be here any minute, for the big match. Do you really mean to tell me you've never played croquet?
- ALICE: It's a bit old-fashioned where I come from. 30
- DUCHESS: You do think the Queen will receive me today, don't you? Just have to make sure I pick the right moment –

[A fanfare.]

Oh dolly, she's coming, she's coming.

[The DUCHESS drags ALICE off the pitch.] 35

- COMMENTATOR 1: If you've just joined us we're reporting from the annual All – Wonderland Croquet Tournament, in the presence of her majesty the Queen, croquet's greatest fan.
- COMMENTATOR 2: And of course his majesty the King.
- COMMENTATOR 1: The King, yes, and her majesty the Queen looking as radiant as ever – you know it's a wonder to me to think that those delicate hands were up until last night hard at work baking tarts, and yet now here she is, quite serene, not a dusting of flour or a spot of jam in sight. 40
- She is, truly, the Queen of Hearts.
- COMMENTATOR 2: And what a tea we shall have later. 45
- COMMENTATOR 1: The White Rabbit there, attending to every royal whim in his usual indispensable way, the model of discretion.
- ALICE: *[To DUCHESS.]* Does the White Rabbit work for the Queen?

COMMENTATOR 2:	What secrets must those ears have heard, eh?	
COMMENTATOR 1:	Yes indeed.	50
ALICE:	If he works for the Queen that must mean I'm in the right place, mustn't it?	
COMMENTATOR 2:	Not um, bad secrets, I mean –	
COMMENTATOR 1:	The Queen now rising from her royal seat to address the crowd – a reverent hush, if you please.	55
	<i>[The QUEEN stands up.</i>	
	<i>ALICE looks at the QUEEN properly for the first time.]</i>	
ALICE:	She looks like my mum!	
DUCHESS:	Shhh.	
QUEEN:	Most dear, most loyal, most delicious subjects.	60
ALICE:	She sounds like my mum, too –	
QUEEN:	It is with great pleasure that you would like to thank me for laying on such a magnificent spectacle this afternoon, and for the love and fidelity you enjoy. From me.	
ALICE:	This means I'm definitely in the right place.	65
DUCHESS:	Really, dolly, you ought to be quiet.	
QUEEN:	I think we can all agree that there is no-one in all Wonderland more wonderful than me, and for that you are, of course, profoundly grateful. From the bottom of your hearts.	
ALICE:	I should go and speak to her then maybe she can click her fingers or her shoes or something and get me out of here.	70
	<i>[ALICE steps over the rope at the side of the pitch to try to move towards the QUEEN, but before she's covered any distance, a match OFFICIAL swoops in and stops her.]</i>	
OFFICIAL:	Sorry miss, you can't go over there.	75
ALICE:	But I need to speak to my –	
OFFICIAL:	Come on, we don't want any trouble – off the green, please.	
ALICE:	But I want to talk to the Queen.	
OFFICIAL:	Only players allowed to approach the Queen, miss.	
QUEEN:	My husband and I were remarking only the other day how lucky you are to be ruled by such a just, reasonable, compassionate queen as me –	80
	<i>[There's a shout from an unseen WONDERLANDER in the crowd.]</i>	
WONDERLANDER:	Tell us about the tarts!	
QUEEN:	Who said that? Off with his head!	85
	<i>[The KING comes close to the QUEEN's side.]</i>	
KING:	Beheadings later, my dear – Please continue, we're hanging on every word.	
	<i>[The QUEEN composes herself and continues.]</i>	

QUEEN:	I simply cannot tell you how pleased you are to be here, in the presence of me. Me are happy to invite you all – or those of you still in possession of your heads by that point – to a croquet tea at which my home made tarts will be served to the most deserving among you.	90
	But before that – to the match. What a happy coincidence that croquet, my favourite sport, is also the favourite sport of all Wonderlanders everywhere. And what an exciting game me will have today – a champion, undefeated for twenty-five matches, and an unknown challenger. Who among you is brave enough to take on this quest for glory?	95
	<i>[The QUEEN looks at the crowd. No-one volunteers.]</i>	100
ALICE:	I SAID – who among you is brave enough to take on the challenge?	
DUCHESS:	Why won't anyone volunteer?	
QUEEN:	No one could defeat the champion. He's – Never mind that the last challenger had to have a hedgehog removed from his buttocks – he was right as rain in no time.	105
	Come on, Wonderland. Where's your lust for adventure?	
	<i>[Still no volunteers.]</i>	
	I WANT TO WATCH SOME CROQUET.	
	If no one volunteers then off with everyone's head. Off with his head, and her head, and his head and his head and off with their heads over there and ...	110
ALICE:	If I play, I'll get to meet the Queen, right?	
DUCHESS:	You play?	
	<i>[ALICE looks at her HEDGEHOG and FLAMINGO.]</i>	
ALICE:	What d'you think, guys?	115
HEDGEHOG:	No no no I'm scared, he's scary.	
FLAMINGO:	Do you know, I can't today, I've got to go to the chiropodist.	
ALICE:	Come on, let's be brave, let's do it.	
	<i>[ALICE goes to the match official.]</i>	
OFFICIAL:	I'd like to be the challenger, please.	120
QUEEN:	Are you sure?	
OFFICIAL:	... and your head and your head and – Your majesty – we have a challenger.	
	<i>[ALICE steps forward. The QUEEN looks her up and down with a flicker of recognition, then claps her hands, delighted.]</i>	125
	<i>The crowd breathes a sigh of relief.]</i>	
QUEEN:	Bring out the champion!	
	<i>[The crowd goes wild as the champion (wearing a helmet with a face-cage) is carried in, triumphant, and does a pre-emptive lap of honour.]</i>	130

- COMMENTATOR 1: The crowd going suitably loopy there for the entrance of the All-Wonderland Croquet champion.
- COMMENTATOR 2: And we've just been passed some statistics about today's challenger – never been known to win a tournament, never to our knowledge even handled a flamingo. 135
- COMMENTATOR 1: Could this be the shortest game in the history of this venerable championship?
- [The champion takes off his mask and snarls at the crowd who squeal with delight.]*
- ALICE *recognises him.*] 140
- ALICE: That's the man – that's the man I saw! *He's* the champion?
 FLAMINGO: The Knave of Hearts.
 ALICE: But he can't be – I saw him –
 FLAMINGO: Never been beaten. He's the Queen's favourite.
 HEDGEHOG: Gosh, the things he can do with a hedgehog ... 145
- [The KNAVE, having finished snarling at the crowd, advances on ALICE, menacingly. She stands with her flamingo lowered, trying to be brave. He circles her, then comes close and looks her in the eye, challengingly.]*
- He puts his helmet back on and smacks it down on the top of his head – he's ready to play. The crowd whoop and cheer. The KNAVE backs away from ALICE, and goes to select a flamingo from a rack displayed to him by the OFFICIAL.]* 150
- FLAMINGO: Oooh – ahh – the blood's all rushing to my head – ahhh –
 HEDGEHOG: You mustn't leave him upside down for too long – the blood all rushes to his head. 155
 ALICE: I'm so sorry.
- [ALICE lifts the FLAMINGO to an upright position.]*
- FLAMINGO: Oh yes, that's much bet –
- [The FLAMINGO faints, going floppy in ALICE's arms.]* 160
The FLAMINGO is still.]
- HEDGEHOG: Any minute now ...
 ALICE: Is he going to be OK to play?
 COMMENTATOR 1: The Knave now kneeling at the feet of his patron, her majesty the Queen who is – 165
 COMMENTATOR 2: We think –
 COMMENTATOR 1: Yes yes, she's about to give him the royal hedgehog to play with.
 COMMENTATOR 2: An honour indeed.
- [The QUEEN gives the KING a signal and he opens a small wooden box with a golden hedgehog inside it. He offers the hedgehog to the KNAVE, who takes it and bows to the QUEEN. She waves, regally, then gives her husband another signal.]* 170
- KING: Let's play croquet!

FLAMINGO:	Come on then, let's get on with it.	
HEDGEHOG:	It's your shot first.	175
	<i>[ALICE walks to the first hoop.]</i>	
COMMENTATOR 1:	Our challenger now coming to the starting position to take the first shot.	
	<i>[ALICE puts her HEDGEHOG down on the floor.]</i>	
	Let's go in for a closer look.	
	<i>[The COMMENTATORS wheel themselves towards ALICE and watch her intently.]</i>	180
COMMENTATOR 2:	The concentration on the challenger's face – what must she be feeling at this moment right now?	
	<i>[ALICE takes the shot, and it gets almost to the hoop.]</i>	
COMMENTATOR 1:	Not a bad shot there from the challenger, but will it be enough?	185
	<i>[The KNAVE steps onto the pitch and places his hedgehog in the starting position.]</i>	
COMMENTATOR 2:	Here we go now – the Knave getting ready for the shot –	
	<i>[He knocks his hedgehog towards the hoop, but it seems to be going off course.]</i>	190
KNAVE:	Look up there!	
	<i>[Everyone except ALICE looks up in the sky where the KNAVE is pointing. He runs to his hedgehog, and taps it with his foot so that it's going through the hoop just as everyone looks back down again.]</i>	
	Sorry, thought I saw something.	195
COMMENTATOR 1:	Classic shot. A player at the very top of his game.	
ALICE:	He was cheating!	
KING:	Action replay!	
	<i>[Everyone goes backwards to where they were for the KNAVE's shot, then he plays it in slow motion as if it had gone through the hoop perfectly. The QUEEN claps with delight.]</i>	200
ALICE:	That's not what happened!	
COMMENTATOR 2:	A triumphant first hoop for the Knave.	
COMMENTATOR 1:	Time for the challenger's next shot – can she get through that first hoop at last?	205
	<i>[ALICE hits her hedgehog and it goes through the first hoop.]</i>	
COMMENTATOR 1:	Yes, keeping herself in a steady second place, there.	
ALICE:	Yeah, OK, I'm trying my best.	
	<i>[The KNAVE steps up to take his next shot. It gets a good way towards the second hoop, but doesn't go through it.]</i>	210

The KNAVE makes a frustrated sound and smacks his flamingo's head on the floor. The crowd inhales sharply.]

COMMENTATOR 2: The Knave showing some frustration there.
 COMMENTATOR 1: The point at which he'd usually call for a new –
 KNAVE: New flamingo! 215
 COMMENTATOR 1: Yes, he's calling for a new flamingo now.

[The OFFICIAL hands the KNAVE another flamingo and the KNAVE hands the OFFICIAL his old one.]

COMMENTATOR 2: Let's hope this helps him onto a happier footing.
 COMMENTATOR 1: What's the challenger going to do now? 220

[ALICE takes her shot. It looks like it'll go through the second hoop, but then the KNAVE puts down a bowl of bread and milk at the side of the hoop, and the hedgehog goes towards that instead.]

QUEEN: Well played!
 ALICE: That's not fair. 225

[ALICE goes up to the official.]

He's giving my hedgehog food – that's cheating.

[The OFFICIAL looks towards the QUEEN. The QUEEN nods to the KING.]

KING: Play on! 230

[The KNAVE takes his shot and his hedgehog sails through the hoop.]

COMMENTATOR 1: Beautiful.
 COMMENTATOR 2: Liquid croquet.
 COMMENTATOR 1: That's the kind of shot that gets me out of bed in the morning, I have to say. 235

[The QUEEN claps and nods to the KING again.]

KING: Free shot to the Knave!
 ALICE: What? No!
 COMMENTATOR 2: A well deserved bonus now for the Knave –
[The KNAVE takes his free shot and his hedgehog goes towards the third hoop, but not through it.] 240

Not a bad shot, but not his best.

QUEEN: Free shot to the Knave!
 COMMENTATOR 2: The Queen herself calling for a free shot.
 COMMENTATOR 1: The royal prerogative in action there from croquet's greatest fan. 245

[The KNAVE hits his hedgehog and it goes through the third hoop. The QUEEN and the crowd all cheer. ALICE looks on, helpless.]

QUEEN: Hurrah! Free shot!

[The KNAVE hits his hedgehog towards the fourth hoop.]

Free shot! 250
COMMENTATOR 2: And another free shot...

[The QUEEN calls for as many free shots as it takes for the KNAVE to get his hedgehog through the fourth hoop.]

The KNAVE pants, showing some fatigue.]

COMMENTATOR 1: A brilliant run for the Knave, bringing him tantalisingly close to the winner's post. 255

KING: Time Out!

COMMENTATOR 1: The King calling time out now, giving the players a well-earned rest.

[The KNAVE goes to sit in a chair and is surrounded by attendants who mop his brow, feed him drinks and generally gee him up.] 260

COMMENTATOR 2: And while we're waiting for play to resume, why don't we read out a few of your birthday messages?

COMMENTATOR 1: Yes, I've a card here saying happy birthday Betsy from all your friends in Wonderland Border Control...

ALICE: This is stupid – I might as well give up. 265

HEDGEHOG: I'm sorry, I'm a sucker for a bit of bread and milk.

ALICE: If he's going to play like that, cheating all the time. I can't beat it. And anyway, everyone wants him to win.

FLAMINGO: No one beats the Knave of Hearts.

ALICE: Yeah, I can see why. No one gets a fair run. 270

COMMENTATOR 1: And here's another of your messages, though I'm not sure I quite understand this one.

COMMENTATOR 2: What does it say?

COMMENTATOR 1: 'Alice. Alice. Alice. Has anyone seen Alice. I can't find Alice. I've looked everywhere. D'you think she's run off somewhere? Alice. Alice.' 275

COMMENTATOR 2: Seems to be for someone called Alice.

ALICE: I'm Alice, that's me.

COMMENTATOR 1: Sure it makes perfect sense to someone out there.

FLAMINGO: Who was it from?

HEDGEHOG: Sounded a bit worried. 280

ALICE: My dad – Dad? Mum? I'm here – I'm trying to get back.

If they can send a message, they must be close, mustn't they? I must be near the end.

OK, guys. Let's win this so I can get home.

FLAMINGO: Win this? How can we win this? No-one beats the – 285

ALICE: Yeah, you said.

But wouldn't it be amazing if we did beat him? Why should he get away with it, playing like that? He smacked that poor flamingo's head really hard.

FLAMINGO: That was my cousin Harold. 290

ALICE: Let's do it for Harold.

HEDGEHOG: But how can we do it?

ALICE: I don't know, but why don't we – Give it our best shot. You just have to do the best you can with what you've got, don't you?

FLAMINGO: My best shot... 295

- ALICE: *Literally* your best shot. D'you want to be the kind of flamingo that just gives in when things get difficult?
- FLAMINGO: No. No, right, come on then. For Harold.
- ALICE: Roger? Who's to say you can't fly if you want to?
- HEDGEHOG: Yes. Yes, you're right. I'm a champion in the making. Let's play the game of our lives. 300
- ALICE: This is so massively cheesy it's *got* to work.
- KING: Play on!
- COMMENTATOR 1: The King calling for the game to be resumed there.
- COMMENTATOR 2: If you've just joined us, the Knave looks to be only one shot away from a resounding victory. 305
- COMMENTATOR 1: One final consolation shot for the challenger first.
- COMMENTATOR 2: And there she is, flamingo at the ready – what's that expression on her face, would you say?
- COMMENTATOR 1: If I didn't know better I'd say it was – 310
- COMMENTATOR 2: Yes?
- COMMENTATOR 1: I'd say it was *determination*.
- [ALICE *steels herself and takes the shot.*
- By sheer force of will, Roger the Hedgehog goes through the third hoop, through the fourth then turns a corner to hit the winners post. The crowd gasp in amazement.]* 315
- COMMENTATOR 2: That's it! That's it! The challenger has won the match!
- COMMENTATOR 1: The Knave of Hearts *and* the laws of physics taking an absolute pasting there. What a game.
- COMMENTATOR 2: Who'd have thought at the beginning of today that by the end of today the world would look as very different as it looks now at the end of today. 320
- COMMENTATOR 1: Yes indeed. A new All-Wonderland Croquet champion.
- COMMENTATOR 2: Won it fair and square.
- COMMENTATOR 1: And doesn't the Knave of Hearts look cross about it. 325
- [*The KNAVE storms off in a huff.*]
- COMMENTATOR 2: Yes, he'll be kicking himself tonight. The challenger now approaching the podium to receive her medal from her majesty the Queen.
- COMMENTATOR 1: A great honour for any citizen of Wonderland.
- COMMENTATOR 2: Seconds away from coming face to face with her majesty. 330
- ALICE: Hello.
- QUEEN: I beg your pardon.
- ALICE: Hi. I mean, here I am, so –
- QUEEN: Are you addressing me?
- ALICE: Mission accomplished, here I am. Mum. 335
- QUEEN: Mum?
- ALICE: OK, no, sorry – just you look a lot like my mum, so –
- WHITE RABBIT: The medal, your majesty.
- [*The WHITE RABBIT hands the Queen the gold winner's medal.*]
- ALICE: Hi. 340
- WHITE RABBIT: Hello?
- [*The OFFICIAL comes over to the WHITE RABBIT and whispers in his ear.*]

One moment.

[*The WHITE RABBIT steps away to speak to the official in private. The QUEEN hangs the medal around ALICE's neck.*] 345

QUEEN: I wanted the knave to win. He's my favourite.
ALICE: Yeah, I'm sorry. But I needed to speak to you. And the Duchess sort of said that the only way I could do that was to play croquet and get presented to you at the end. 350

QUEEN: The Duchess said this? The Duchess?
ALICE: I've done everything I was supposed to do, yeah? So now I'm ready to go back, because I think my dad is kind of worried about where I am.

QUEEN: The Duchess!
ALICE: Look, I'm happy to hand the medal back and give it to the Knave if you want to for some kind of technicality because I want to go home really, more than I wanted to win at the croquet. 355

QUEEN: Give it to me then.

[*ALICE takes the medal off her neck and hands it back to the QUEEN.*

The WHITE RABBIT returns and goes close to the QUEEN.] 360

WHITE RABBIT: Your majesty –

[*He whispers in her ear. The QUEEN suddenly shrieks.*]

QUEEN: Stolen! My tarts? Who stole my tarts?

That's it – No more croquet! Whoever stole the tarts will lose his head!

[*The whole crowd quakes with fear.*] 365

Out of my way!

[*The QUEEN goes to leave. As she is doing so, the DUCHESS steps into her path.*]

DUCHESS: Your majesty – may I say how delightful it is to me to be back at court and back in your – 370

QUEEN: Get out of my way, idiot!

DUCHESS: But your majesty – You're my best friend!

[*The QUEEN leaves, with the DUCHESS pursuing her.*]

ALICE: No – wait – please – I need to speak to you –

[*The WONDERLANDERS hurriedly pack away the croquet ground – rolling the lawn up and carrying it off, wheeling out the QUEEN's podium etc... ALICE tries to get to the QUEEN, but is thwarted every time by people standing in front of her.*] 375

No – please – please come back –

[*ALICE is left alone as everything and everyone gets packed away.*] 380

The big door clanks shut behind her and ALICE shouts with frustration.]

No no NO!

I don't know what to do I don't know what to do.

I mean what else do you bloody want me to do?

I've played the stupid game, I've done the Heart thing – it's not a place, 385
I've tried that, and it's not a person. I mean I'm running out of options
here, I'm struggling for any kind of idea at all. I've tried to talk to all
these crazy people but d'you know what? *They're all insane!* Nobody's
given me anything that's even remotely useful – what, a stupid
piece-of-nonsense poem and I'm supposed to go 'oh yeah, eureka, I 390
know exactly what to do now'.

[ALICE *hears a voice from another world.*]

MUM:	Has anyone seen Alice?	
ALICE:	Mum?	
DAD:	We can't find her anywhere.	395
ALICE:	I'm here!	
DAD:	Have you checked the attic?	
ALICE:	The attic's Joe's room, I can't go in there.	
MUM:	I don't know, I can't go in there.	
DAD:	She's probably just hiding somewhere.	400
MUM:	Maybe she's gone out.	
DAD:	She's not been out in two weeks.	
ALICE:	Mummy? Can you come and get me? I've got nothing left.	

I don't know how to get home, mum. I've got nothing.

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