

Alice in Hell: 13 slithy variations

by James Knight

1. Having made Alice from one of the Mad Hatter's ribs, Humpty Dumpty told her she could do anything, except speak. "How bothersome!" she said.

2. In the church, Alice was horrified to be presented with a talking lamb. "EAT ME!" it bleated and, as the Red Queen cut its throat, "DRINK ME!"

3. The chess pieces represented people Alice knew. The white were the saved; the red, the damned. She picked them all up, one at a time, and kissed them.

4. Alice was forced to kneel and pray to Our Lady of the Hearts. As she bowed her head, a priest lopped it off. After a cursory funeral, a red rose was placed on her grave.

5. On Judgment Day, Alice found herself under the scrutiny of a murderous legal system. When she shouted, "Nonsense!" the sun imploded and the White Rabbit's watch stopped.

6. Virgil appeared to Alice as a white rabbit and guided her through Hell. Satan, in the form of a vanishing cat, weighed up her soul.

7. On reaching the eighth row of God's infernal chessboard, Alice was assumed into Heaven, where she ruled with a rust-red fist and a vacant stare.

8. Those present at the tea party were not permitted to leave. They would remain there forever. They smelt Alice's innocence and hoped she could save them. She smiled at their naivety.

9. Banished from Eden, Alice fell down the rabbit hole, past the circles of Hell and into the yawning mouth of the Jabberwocky.

10. After the Harrowing of Wonderland, Alice lay her head in her sister's lap and slept.

11. A blue caterpillar sat in the Tree of Knowledge. When Alice talked to him she forgot who she was and what the rules were.

12. Although she had been baptised in a sea of her own tears, Alice knew that she was lost forever.

13. The White Rabbit's watch started again. Years passed. Poring over the book of Alice's life, scholars couldn't agree on what it might mean.

