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BATTLESHIP POSITIONS

ALICE'S FLEET

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										



Rowing boat

QUEEN BEE'S FLEET

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										



Patrol boat



Scuttleflot

Alice to arrive in her rowing boat, and win in seven turns.

Long ago there was a boat
With sisters on a river.
They asked a tale while being afloat
Which Dodgson did deliver.
It was a feat, and so he wrote
A manuscript to give her.

Surely he had no idea
His stories would entail
Such impact on their reader's glee,
And spread on global scale.
World-famous fairy-tales they'd be
For ages to prevail.

His stories with their curious creatures
Are to us all familiar:
Humpty Dumpty trying to teach us,
The Jabberwock and its killer,
And also Chapter Five that features
A smoking Caterpillar!

Many volumes have been sold
 Of Dodgson's works of art.
So often have the tales been told
 That pages fall apart—
But still they bring me joy and hold
 A place within my heart.

I therefore feel they qualify
 For further continuation.
Before you lies the proof that I
 Could not resist temptation.
I hope you'll be delighted by
 My very own creation!

Chapter I

Taking the Plunge



ALICE stumbled out of the rowing boat, slightly relieved to be back on land. It had been all nice and fun to float on the little waves the wind had created in the water, to take turns in rowing, and to “accidentally” splash water on her sisters, but by now the sun was getting *very* hot on her head, which made her sweaty and uncomfortable. One of her sisters had remarked that she could see her face getting red, “and that is not a good thing at all,” she thought, “for if people can read my face, I will never be able to keep a secret again! ‘Alice,’ they will ask, ‘did you or did you not take a snack from the jar without permission?’ And then they will be able to read the answer from my face, as it will resemble the pages of that dull book I have to finish for my literature lessons.”

Pondering about how she could make herself look innocent again without having to resort to peeling her skin off (which would, very likely, only make the redness worse), Alice wandered off from the rest of the party. A little further at the shore of the lake she noticed a small rock formation. She knelt down on it and leaned slightly forward in an attempt to see her own reflection in the water, so she would be able to determine exactly what state her face currently was in.

By now there was no more wind, which meant the sun felt even hotter, but also that the smooth surface of the water remained intact. Slowly, Alice began to see her face appear, mirrored in the wet surface. Immediately her mind began to wander off again, as it often did (especially during lessons, for which she was always

scolded by her tutor, who unfortunately could *not* understand that a tiny spider building its little web is oh! so more interesting than a grammar lesson).

“I wonder if it is actually me whom I see in the water?” Alice asked herself. “How do I know it is not *another* Alice, living down there in the lake, who is looking back at me?”

Alice peered deeper into the water. If she focused her eyes a bit differently, she could see both her own reflection and that of her surroundings, as well as dirt and other objects that floated beneath the surface.

“It looks as if there are two worlds *together* down there!” she observed. “A bit of our world, and a bit of the under-water world.”

Alice tilted a little more forward. What *was* that dark lump over there, just behind that leaf?

All of a sudden, a large red herring shot past, splashing up droplets of water when its back cut through the surface.



[...]

and breathe in air, we drink air and breathe in water. As both are done with mouths, you are fully capable of living under water as well—as long as you are prepared to adapt to our culture.”

“And how about using my nose?” asked Alice. “Can one smell down here?”

“Yes, one can,” replied the Fish, “but it will keep you awake. So don’t do it in the evening or you wo’n’t get any sleep.”

Alice did not understand why, but decided not to press the matter, as the Fish already appeared to be very annoyed with her questions.

All of a sudden, there was a loud splash about thirty feet to their right—as if a large object from above had just hit the water.



Alice froze. “What was that?” she cried.

“That was the Scuttleflot,” said the Fish. “The Queen Bee just had it drop a bombshell.”

Alice was both bewildered and alarmed. “What is a Scuttleflot? Who is the Queen Bee? And *why* is she dropping bombs?” she exclaimed.

“Did you arrive here by boat?” the Fish inquired.

“Well, we were rowing on top of the lake with a boat. But my arrival here was more or less by plunge, after we docked,” said Alice.

“That explains it,” said the Fish. “The Queen Bee has noticed the presence of your rowing boat and she considers it a threat to her empire.”

“You mean she wants to sink our rowing boat?” Alice cried out. “She ca’n’t do that!”

“Well, we’ll have to see if she can. But she just proved that she is at least capable of attempting it,” said the Fish.

This did not reassure Alice at all. “What if she actually hits it? We will have to walk all the way back home!”

The Fish shrugged. (That is, Alice thought it did—it was rather hard to see where its shoulders started and where they ended.) “You could swim. Nothing wrong with that.”

Alice did not look forward to having to explain to the others what had happened to their boat and how they now should *all* get wet in order to get home in time before dark. “We did not mean to intrude. And we are no threat to the Queen at all!” pleaded Alice.

“That may very well be,” said the Fish, “but *she* does not know that.”

“Then I must go to her and explain!” decided Alice.

“Too late,” said the Fish. “The game has already started.”

“Game?” said Alice. “This is no game! I don’t want to participate in any of this!”

“You have no choice,” said the Fish.

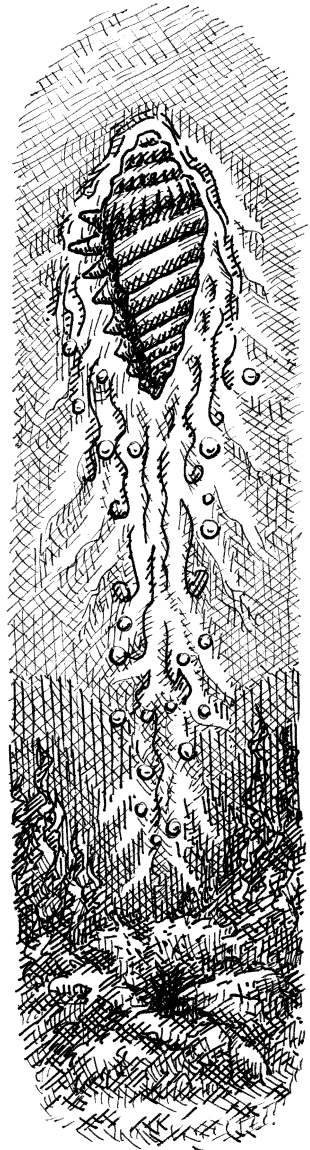
“But—” Alice protested.

“It’s your turn now, by the way.”

“What? I’d first like to be—” Alice started saying.

“2B it is!” the Fish shouted, interrupting her.

And before Alice could say anything else, a large shell that had been hidden under the sand next to her was propelling upwards with great speed. It



penetrated the water line and immediately got out of sight. A few seconds later she heard a muffled crash, not far away.

“You hit her patrol boat!” cheered the Fish. “Well done!”

“But—” Alice tried protesting again.

“You’re good at this!” said the Fish. “Do continue. You now know how it works, so I’ll just leave you to it.” And it started packing up its things.

Alice was getting quite frustrated. “As I said, I have no intention to play any game! I mean the Queen and her empire no harm, and I need her to stop bombarding our boat as soon as possible! Please, would you tell me where I might find her, so I can explain the situation?”

The Fish had finished packing its belongings and began to swim off.

“Where can I find the Queen Bee?” Alice asked it again.

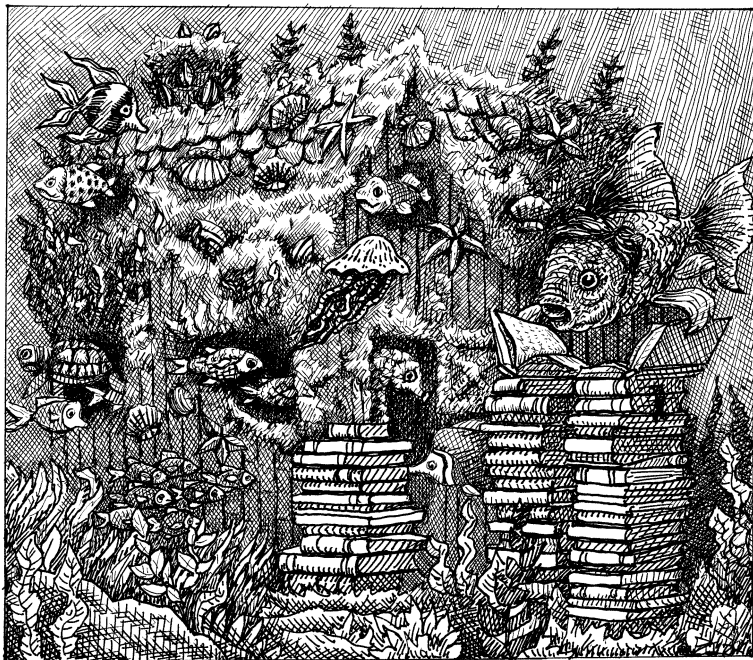
“It goes without saying,” replied the Fish, and to Alice’s frustration it did indeed.

As there was no one else left to ask for directions, Alice decided to continue walking in the direction where she had seen the red herring disappear. Not after long, she came upon a house that had obviously been submerged for quite some time. It was almost completely covered with seaweed and shells. Little sea creatures were swimming through the open windows. In front of the house there was a goldfish, swimming amidst high stacks of books, intently comparing the content of two of them.

“Good day,” Alice said, this time avoiding any introductions. “Can you please tell me why there is a house at the bottom of this lake?”

The Goldfish looked up from its books. “I’m sorry, I’m afraid I cannot. That would be inappropriate. History repeats itself, you know.”

Before Alice could figure out what it meant by that, all of a sudden a majestic and solemn voice came out of nowhere:—



*"Once upon a midnight creepy, while I pondered, tired and sleepy,
Over many a dull and tedious recurrence of orbiculate stroll—
While I floated, there was consilience, and suddenly a stroke of
brilliance,
Creating strong resilience, happening in my goldfish bowl.
'Tis a turnaround,' I fluttered, 'happening in my goldfish bowl—
There's more than this, this swimming hole!"*

*Ah, distinctly I concluded that this water was polluted,
And each separate day I swam here did just break my heart and
soul.
Eagerly I wished escaping;—vainly I had tried landscaping,
But no single act of draping had improved my goldfish bowl—
For there was no way to liven up my tiny goldfish bowl—
Forever dull this wretched hole.*

*Then the emanating glee in my short-term memory
Thrilled me—filled me with excitement never matched by a sausage
roll;*

*So that now, to take some action, swam I with a drill contraption
Towards the glass refraction and at once I took control—
I reached the glass refraction and once there I took control;*

Poked and cracked to bore a hole.

*But because the glass's thickness, adding to its very slickness,
Soon I came to the conclusion that I would not reach my goal.
This darn bowl wo'n't take disjointing, which is surely
disappointing;*

*I can see a prospect daunting: to be jailed without parole—
I'll forever be unhappy when I'm jailed without parole;—*

So unable to drill a hole.

*'Open now!' I shouted loudly, while my tears rolled down
unproudly,*

I had no idea my crying would be taking such a toll.

*Only recognizing slowly, that the waters rose below me,
And I made it overflow, see! Filling up my goldfish bowl—
Saw the water level rising just above my goldfish bowl—*

Escaped, and swam, without a hole!

*And the water, never slowing, still kept flowing, still kept flowing
From the house into the gardens all around my goldfish bowl;
Still this water kept on streaming and it muffled all my screaming
Any chance of stopping seeming far beyond my own control.*

So the waters kept expanding far beyond my own control,

And engulfed—every soul!"

"Oh," exclaimed Alice, "so that is why the water is so salty here!"

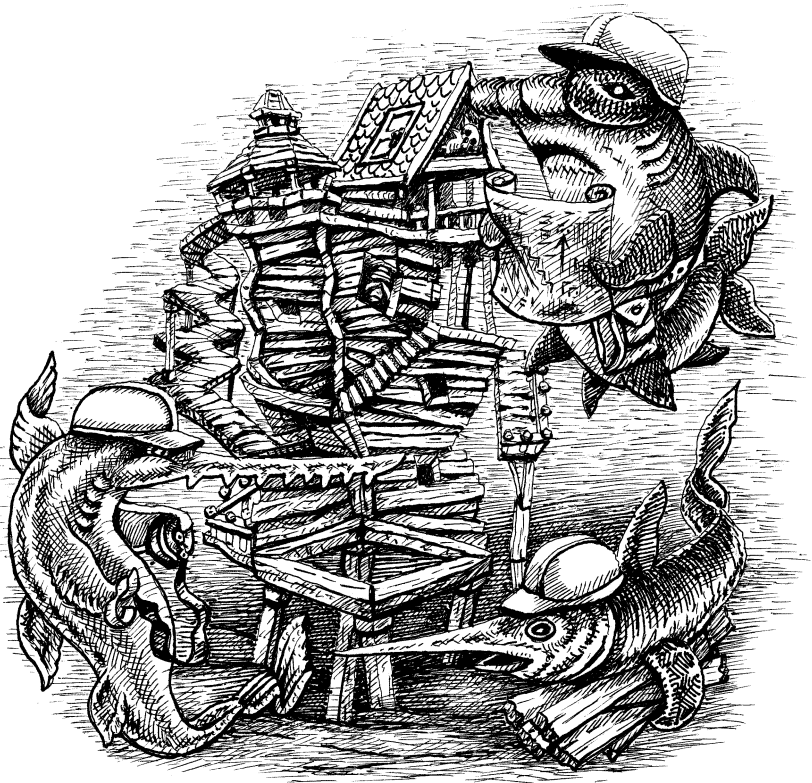
[...]

So she continued on her way as silently as possible, trying to avoid stepping on sticks and stones, when Alice realised that there was actually quite a lot of noise coming from up ahead. It did not sound as if it was from a monster, but she kept very quiet nevertheless. (Of course, Alice had not actually ever *heard* a monster, so she could not be absolutely certain that this wasn't the sound of one. There was once a time when she had *thought* that she had heard a monster, when she was lying in bed and had noticed strange noises coming from underneath it. But after she had called for her mother, who had then looked bravely under the bed to chase it away, it had turned out just to be one of their kittens who was still trying to figure out how to purr properly.)

As Alice came closer, she began to hear voices over the noise. "It sounds as if they are building something over there," she thought. And indeed, when she carefully peeked behind a heap of sand from which the noise seemed to originate, she saw two sharks and a swordfish working on a *very* awkward looking construction.

Alice quickly drew her head back. Although it was neither the Scuttleplot, nor another monster, she figured that drawing the attention of sharks was not a bright idea either—especially since she was now so small, compared to them. So she decided to stay hidden behind the heap of sand for a while to observe them. Perhaps an opportunity to sneak past them unseen would present itself.

Alice tiptoed to the other side of the heap, where a cluster of large plants were growing. They were dense enough to hide her from sight, yet she could still watch the sharks through the gaps between their stems. From this side, she was able to get a better look at the building as well. It was a strange building indeed—not a single wall seemed to be straight, the door appeared to be located on the roof, and there was some kind of vertical balcony sticking out of one of the sides.



Near Alice, there was a large pile of construction wood, and the Swordfish was swimming into its direction. She crouched to the ground in order to hide herself better. While the Swordfish was rummaging through the pile of wood, apparently looking for a suitable piece, Alice suddenly felt something crawling upon her leg. Startled, she looked down, and discovered a little creature making its way up her calf. At that very moment, another one jumped onto her, and she spotted even more tiny creatures emerging from the sand all round her. Unable to contain herself, she jumped up in alarm and began screaming, while desperately kicking her leg,

trying to get the creatures off. She tumbled through the bushes and fell to the ground—straight in front of the Swordfish.

“Please, don’t hurt me! I am no threat to you” pleaded poor Alice. “And I don’t taste nice at all either!” she added quickly, eyeing the sharks.

The Swordfish looked at her, but made no attempt to attack. “I wo’n’t hurt you, if you wo’n’t hurt our pensioners. Be careful, you’re almost crushing them.”

Alice looked to her side, where both her grass crown and the Sand Fleas (as which she was finally able to identify the creatures, now that she could take a good look at them) had fallen. “Your—your pensioners?”

“Yes,” said the Swordfish. “*This* one,” it pointed to the Sand Flea nearest to her, “is president of the board emerita. She oversaw the quality of our material. And *this* one,” it continued, pointing to the other Sand Flea, “is our chairwoman emerita. She was in charge of interior design. The best we ever had!”

“I’m truly sorry, I did not intend to hurt them,” said Alice. “They just gave me quite a scare.”

The Sand Fleas were already burying themselves in the sand again. Before the Swordfish could reply, one of the Sharks, which had a wide, blunt face in the shape of a hammer, shouted: “Get back to work, you old chatterbug, or we’ll never finish this thing in time! Fetch me another beam!”

“All right, all right!” muttered the Swordfish, and shoved a piece of wood towards the other Shark, whose job it apparently was to saw the wood into the right size.

“How long should this beam be sawn?” the Saw-Shark asked the other Shark.

The Hammerhead Shark showed its blueprint, which indicated 10”.

The Saw-Shark randomly chose a spot on the beam, and counted while sawing. When it had counted to ten, it stopped, although it had sawn only about halfway through.

“And how wide should it be?” it asked then.

The Hammerhead Shark looked at its blueprint again. Alice noticed it indicated a width of 2'. “Uhm, it says... two prime...?”

The Saw-Shark shook its head. “Not relevant, we’ll be priming the beams only after we’ve attached them. Let’s skip that part.”

Alice hesitatingly interrupted: “I’m not quite sure that is correct...”

The Swordfish sighed. “It’s all so complicated! We lived here long before the Queen Bee took over and all this became imperial grounds. It is taking us quite some time to get used to her standards. For example, she wants her yard to be only three feet long! Can you imagine?”

“Actually, my point is—” Alice began to say, but then she heard a rustling sound not far away, originating from some bushes. “What is that?” she asked in an alarmed voice, still a bit shaken by the thought of the Scuttleflot being near, encountering sharks and being crawled by creatures all within minutes.

“An ounce is under a stone—” the Swordfish mumbled distractedly.

“Is it trapped?” Alice asked in alarm. “It will be dangerous if it is hurt!”

The Swordfish looked at her incomprehensibly. Then, a tiny guppy emerged from the bushes. Alice took a relieved breath. “It was only a guppy making that noise! Not an ounce!”

“I never said it was,” said the Swordfish.

Meanwhile, the Hammerhead Shark was pounding nails into the beam the Saw-Shark had prepared for it. Each time it took a nail from its toolkit, sounds seemed to emerge from it. Alice walked towards the kit for a closer inspection—“for if something happens to be trapped in there, I should free it!”

And indeed, as soon as the Hammerhead Shark took out another nail, several small voices cried out again: “There it goes! Get ready all of you, *this is not a drill!*—I might be next! Somebody pinch me!—Yes! He nailed it!—No need to tell me; I *saw* that!—

[...]

Chapter XI

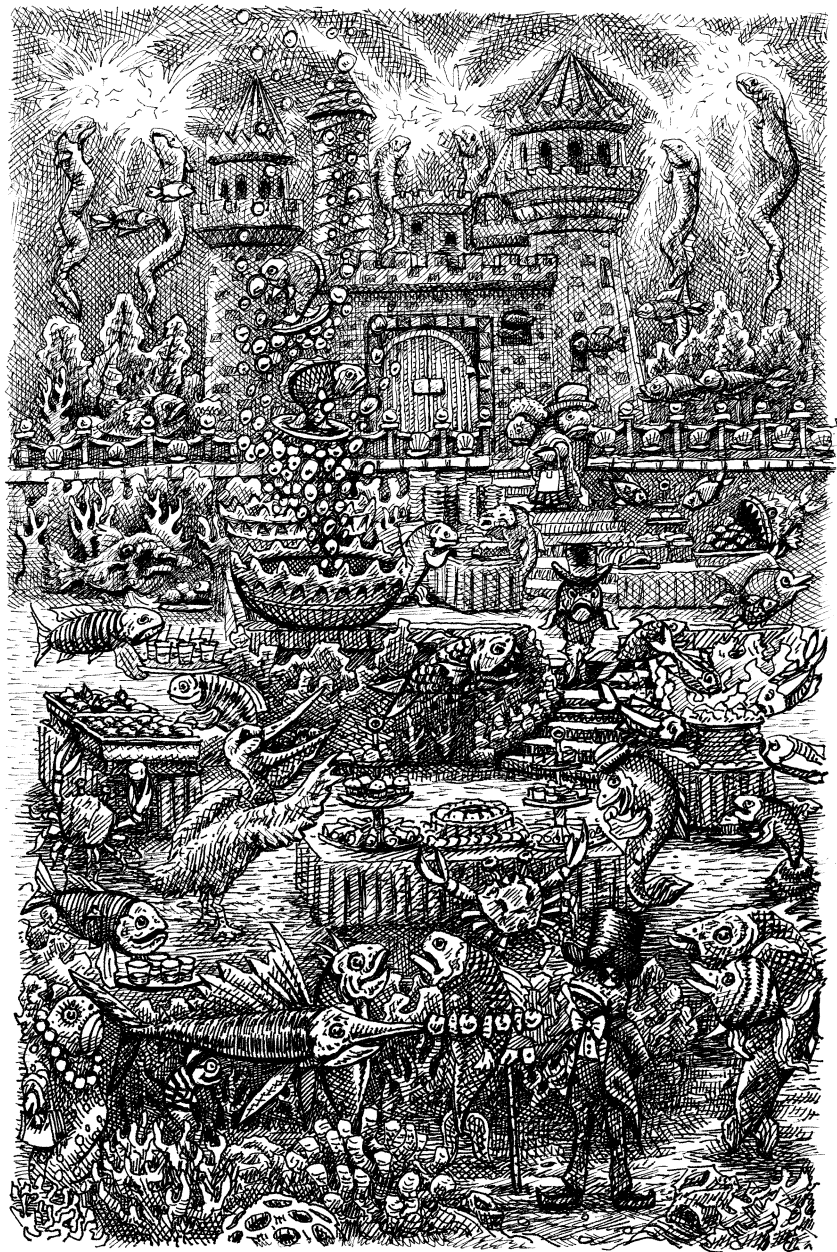
The Queen's Court



It did not take them long to get there. Before Alice knew it, a beautiful castle loomed up, surrounded by extremely well-kept gardens that housed corals in more gorgeous colours than she could count. Meandering paths lined with colourful pebbles crossed the gardens. Here and there were fountains, placed throughout the courtyard in symmetrical patterns. Instead of water, they were sprouting bubbles of air. Colourful garlands were put up, and to top it all off, electric eels were sparking above the crowds. (Which, Alice assumed, was probably the under-water alternative to fireworks.)

“I finally made it!” Alice cheered to herself. “Now I’ll be able to see the Queen Bee. Surely there must be a moment during the party that I can speak to her?”

Quite a number of guests had gathered in the gardens and the party seemed to have started already. It looked as if the guests were amusing themselves very well. There were gouramis surfing the fountains on plates they had acquired from the party tables. Guppies were playing tennis, using their tails as rackets. And a cast of crabs was playing a game that Alice thought must be some version of football. However, as the crabs were only able to walk sideways, they had lined up in rows and the game progressed quite like a table football match, in which a whole line would start shifting to one side to block the ball when it came their way, after which another line of players would start moving sideways when the ball happened to pass through. Once Alice saw the ball make it all the way to the goalkeeper. It easily snatched up the ball in its claws, though immediately thereafter a loud pop! was heard. Sounds of



disappointment emerged from both teams of crab players, mixed with exclamations of “not *again!*”

Alice looked over to the party tables. They were covered with food, some of it looking quite delicious to her, some not at all. A marlin was serving skewered vegetables from its bill, but most guests were helping themselves. A tetra was busy chewing itself right through one of the larger cakes, and a pelican was stuffing its pouch full with anything it could get its wings on. Alice also noticed one fish chasing another, much smaller, guest in an attempt to eat it. The poor little fish only got away because its assailant had to flee itself before the hungry mouth of an even bigger guest. “One would think they’d have rules here about not eating other guests,” Alice said disapprovingly. But no one seemed to mind. The Haddock, who was standing next to her, also merely shrugged his shoulders.

“I shouldn’t mind something to eat or drink, myself,” remarked Alice, who remembered that she still hadn’t had anything since her arrival in the lake, except for the piece of chocolate bar. “The service is terrible—we’ve been standing here for quite some time, and none of the waiters has offered us anything!”

“Of course not!” replied the Haddock. “What did you expect? They are waiters—they are waiting for *you* to call *them!*”

Alice thought that there was some sense in this, and decided to keep it in mind for the next time her father complained about the restaurant staff taking too long to bring their order. Without hesitating, she made eye contact with the waiter swimming nearest to them, which was a hamlet fish. It immediately swam up to them and offered Alice and the others a drink from its tray, which came in a cup with a lid and straw. She examined it closely and then carefully took a sip. She was not at all disappointed about the taste, which was very, very sweet. “What is it?” she asked.

“It’s honey mead. Specially brewed for our Queen!”

“It’s very good!”

“There is nothing either good or bad, but drinking makes it so,” responded the Waiter.