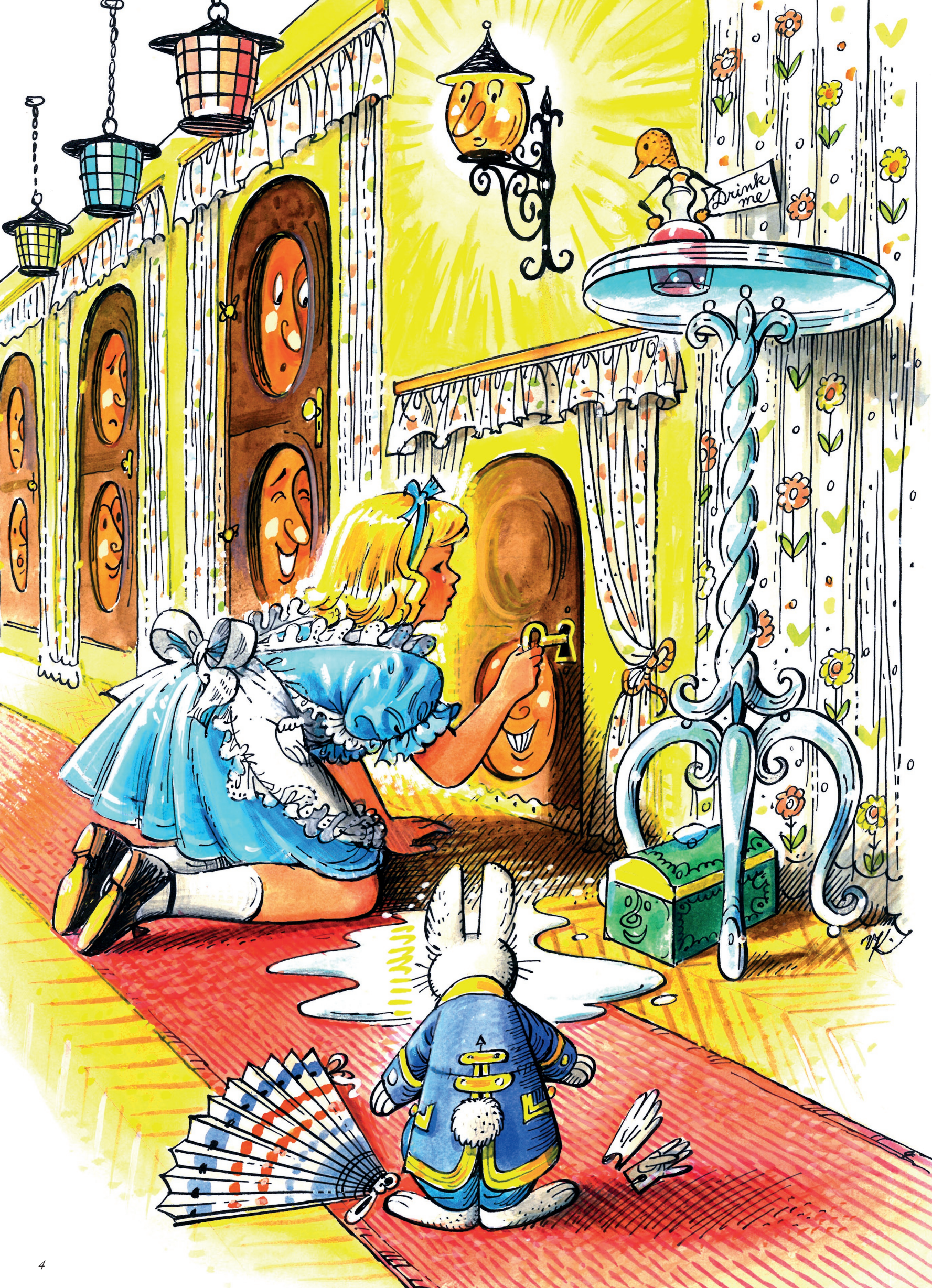
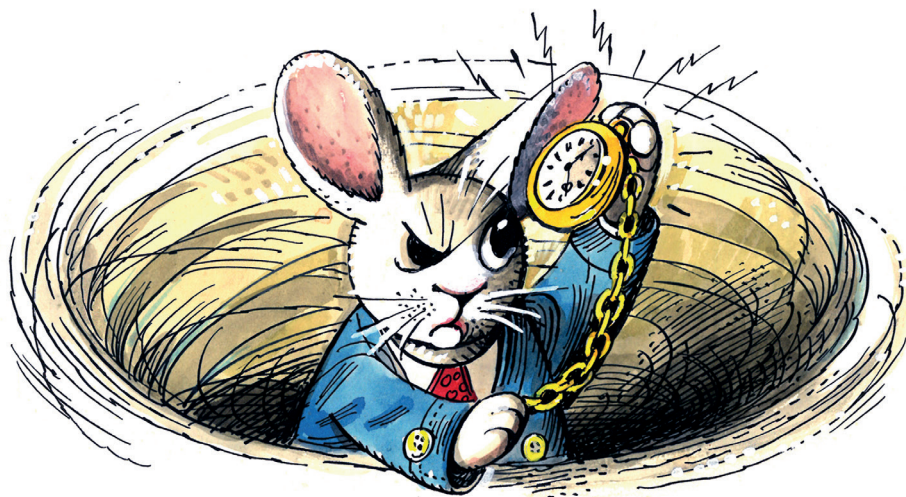


ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Vojtěch Kubašta



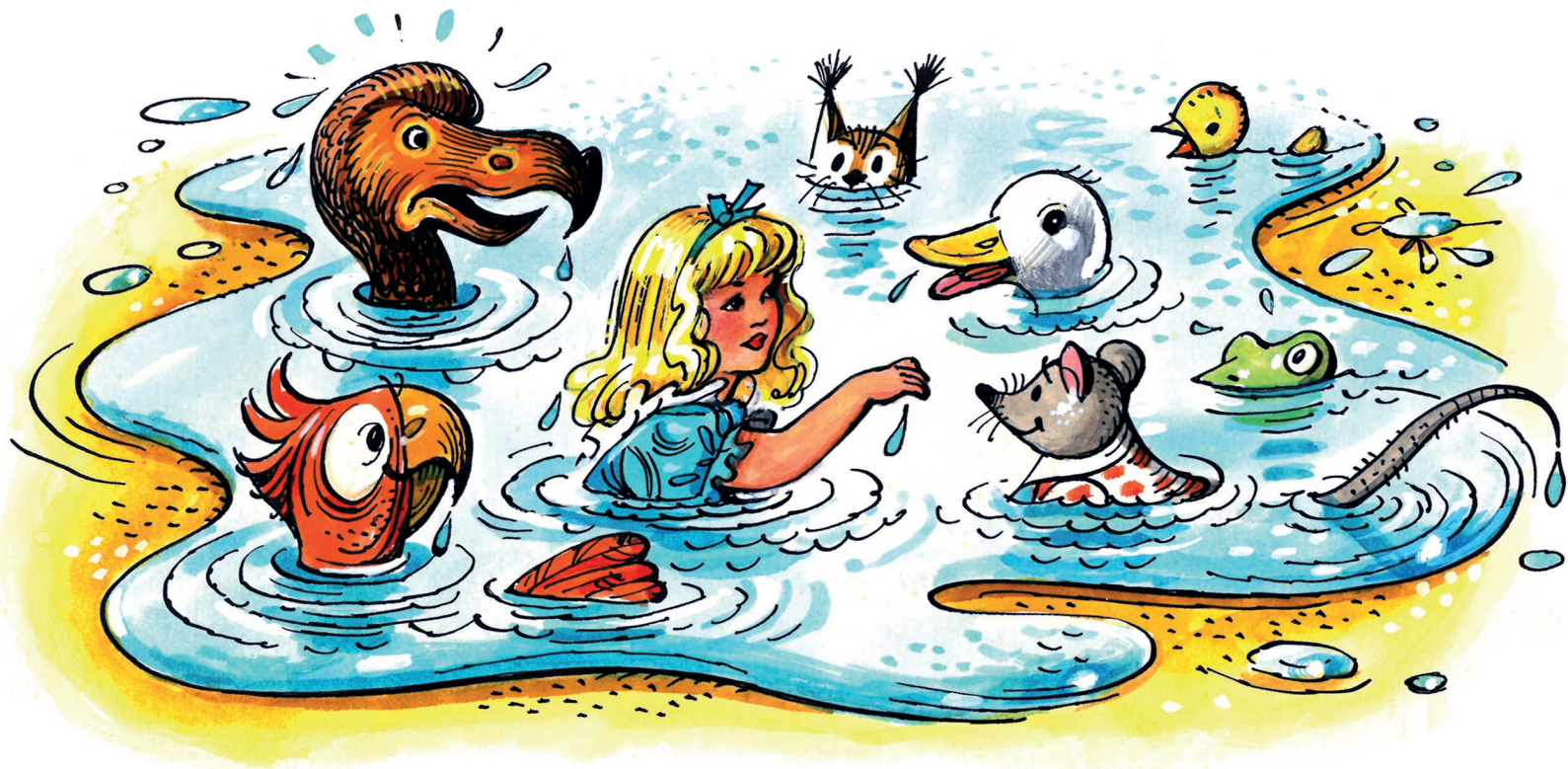


Some moments are long. So long that they drag on and on, so that you fear that they will never end. A girl called Alice was in just such a moment. She was sitting in a meadow, looking at grass, flowers and trees with a lack of interest verging on boredom. Indeed, she was yawning. She would have yawned on but for the arrival of a red-eyed White Rabbit. Having crossed her path, the rabbit came to a halt a short distance away and pulled out a splendid round pocket watch. 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!' the animal lamented, before proceeding across the meadow. A rabbit in a coat with a watch? Alice ran after him, scarcely believing her eyes. Her boredom had shrunk and then vanished in a moment. The little girl was at the end of the meadow, reaching for the rabbit's coat when – whoops! – he disappeared into a rabbit hole. Without a second thought, Alice followed him down there. This was better than being bored! Down she went, feet first. The hole was deeper than she could ever have imagined. Down and down she went. We should add that it was a very nice fall. One of the nicest things about it was the feather-light landing. She found herself in a spacious, well-lit hall with many doors, large and small. Her White Rabbit was standing at its centre, studying his watch and lamenting: 'Oh me, oh my! How late I shall be!' Then he hurried away again, quickly picking up speed. By now, Alice was trying the handles of the doors. In vain: all the

doors were locked.

What was she to do? On a normal day, there would be nothing she could do. On this day, however, the magic was far from over. A small glass table appeared before her. And on the table was—a key! A gold one, small enough to fit into a doll's hand—or into a tiny door behind a curtain! And fit that door it did: the door unlocked in a trice! The open door gave Alice a view of the world's most beautiful garden. How she longed to be among its wild, luxuriant plants, wet her palms in the crystalline waters of the fountains, sit down on a finely carved bench! But for that she would have to be the size of a garden gnome. In girl-size, she couldn't even get her head through the door. Just imagine that by some wondrous chance Alice could be made smaller! Impossible, of course. At least she could quench her thirst from the bottle that had appeared on the table, by the same magic as the table. There was a label on the bottle saying, 'Drink me'. Not only did the liquid taste delicious, but it made Alice's wish come true: she got smaller. Now nothing stood in her way to the garden. Oh yes it did! The door was locked again, the key was on the table, and the table was now too high for Alice to reach the key. Might this cookie with the chocolate words 'Eat me' help her? She took a bite. And a second. With each new bite, Alice grew a little. And so she grew and grew until her head touched the ceiling of the hall... and





that was very high! But I'll never get to see to that lovely garden like this! she thought, and her eyes filled with tears, which fell to the floor in gigantic drops. The White Rabbit happened to be passing. He was carrying leather gloves and a splendid fan. Could this strange long-eared creature help her? He surely knew the rules of this magic land like no other. 'Please, Mr Rabbit...' Alice began. But the animal took fright at the giantess. He dropped his gloves and fan and fled for his life. With a sigh, Alice gathered up the rabbit's things. Maybe boredom on the meadow was better than this strange, upside-down world after all. Feeling ever sadder and more desperate, she fanned herself absent-mindedly. The more she fanned, the smaller she got, until she was small enough to pass through the tiny door. To do so, however, she would need the golden key from the glass table. 'What a scatterbrain I am!' she sobbed. Moments later, she was slipping on her tears and splashing into the sea. At least she thought it was the sea: it was deep, and the water was salty. 'Help! I'm drowning!' she cried, as she flailed this way and that. As she drowned and flailed, it

occurred to her that this was not the sea but a pool of the tears she had shed when she was as high as the ceiling. So I will drown in my own tears, Alice mused. How very strange! But surely that's impossible. Yet stranger things have happened here. And it seems I won't be the only one to drown in my tears... Next to Alice, a mouse was splashing about with a force that turned the salty pool into a turbulent ocean. Into this ocean fell ever more animals – a duck, a dodo, a parrot, an eaglet, a lizard, plus many more creatures, of all shapes and sizes. 'Shouldn't we get out?' Alice suggested. Her teeth were chattering, and she was afraid she would catch a chill. Everyone agreed, so the little girl helped deliver the whole strange group to dry land. When at last she had clambered ashore, wringing wet, Alice checked to see that the animals had made it, too. The Mouse was embarking on a long tale about bold knights of olden times, having explained that storytelling was the best way to get dry. He talked on and on, but none of the others got any drier. 'Enough!' cried the Dodo, stopping the monologue mid-flow. 'Your story is drying no one.



All that will dry us is a proper Caucus race.' 'A what race?' asked Alice. After all she had just been through, nothing would surprise her. 'A Caucus race—a race from the heart,' said the Dodo, who was already marking out the circuit. It is true to say that it was not well drawn, but no one seemed to mind. The Dodo placed the animals at various places along the track. Then he started the race. The competitors could run as they wished, when they wished, and where they wished. Sometime later, the Dodo announced the end of the race. The racers stopped in mid-motion. All were now bone-dry from head to toe, and all were winners! The time had come for the Mouse to continue his story of bold warriors and generals, so that the animals and Alice would know how it ended. But Alice's failure to attend to the tale caused him offence. Then the White Rabbit came running up in a panic. He was searching for the leather gloves and fan. These things belonged not to him but to a certain duchess. 'Go to my home, Mary Ann,' he said to Alice, having seen that the girl was watching him with curiosity. 'And bring the gloves and the fan. Quickly!' As Alice was

approaching the White Rabbit's house, she realized that he had taken her for the housemaid. Everything around her had changed in the space of a few steps. The little house seemed to be coming towards her. It bore a sign with the White Rabbit's name. The gloves and fan were in a cosy parlour. Alice picked them up, intending to take them to the Rabbit. But then she noticed a bottle with tempting contents. It may not be asking me to drink from it, but drink from it I shall, Alice said to herself. I wonder what will happen when I do. She drank and drank, until the bottle was drained. Then she found herself growing again. How many times had she grown that day? This time she grew so tall that her head went through the ceiling, while her arms and legs forced themselves through the windows and door. Now I've done it! Alice said to herself. I'll be sitting with this house around my neck till Judgement Day. As she sat there, her hands found a cake on the ground, and desperate as she was, she bit into it. Straight afterwards, she shrank back to her tiniest state. She fled from the house. When a person is as small as Alice was then, everything





ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

A little girl called Alice follows a strange White Rabbit and jumps after him into a rabbit hole. What happens next? Does she fall right to the bottom, to a place where the rules of the human world are of no use? Does she grow to be a giantess and also shrink to be mere millimetres tall? Is this a place where Time doesn't matter, and everything is decided by the Queen of Hearts? All of this applies! If you would like to join Alice in getting to the bottom of the mystery, you are in the right place. Settle down with Lewis Carroll's immortal story in a unique rendering by world-famous artist Vojtěch Kubašta, whose works have entertained generations of children. And make haste, or the White Rabbit will get away...



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