



# **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Decoded: The Full Text of Lewis Carroll's Novel with its Many Hidden Meanings Revealed**

*David Day*

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**This gorgeous 150th anniversary edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is also a revelatory work of scholarship.**

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*--published 150 years ago in 1865--is a book many of us love and feel we know well. But it turns out we have only scratched the surface. Scholar David Day has spent many years down the rabbit hole of this children's classic and has emerged with a revelatory new view of its contents. What we have here, he brilliantly and persuasively argues, is a complete classical education in coded form--Carroll's gift to his "wonder child" Alice Liddell.

In two continuous commentaries, woven around the complete text of the novel for ease of cross-reference on every page, David Day reveals the many layers of teaching, concealed by manipulation of language, that are carried so lightly in the beguiling form of a fairy tale. These layers relate directly to Carroll's interest in philosophy, history, mathematics, classics, poetry, spiritualism and even to his love of music--both sacred and profane. His novel is a memory palace, given to Alice as the great gift of an education. It was delivered in coded form because in that age, it was a gift no girl would be permitted to receive in any other way.

Day also shows how a large number of the characters in the book are based on real Victorians. *Wonderland*, he shows, is a veritable "Who's Who" of Oxford at the height of its power and influence in the Victorian Age.

There is so much to be found behind the imaginary characters and creatures that inhabit the pages of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. David Day's warm, witty and brilliantly insightful guide--beautifully designed and stunningly illustrated throughout in full colour--will make you marvel at the book as never before.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Decoded: The Full Text of Lewis Carroll's Novel with its Many Hidden Meanings Revealed Details**

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Author : David Day

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## **From Reader Review Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Decoded: The Full Text of Lewis Carroll's Novel with its Many Hidden Meanings Revealed for online ebook**

### **Evanston Public Library says**

Fans of the girl down the rabbit hole have much to celebrate this year. In addition to a new Tim Burton movie version of Through the Lookingglass, three glorious new editions of the original books are hitting the shelves in time for holiday giving.

The Annotated Alice has set the bar for Alice criticism since its debut in 1959. Martin Gardner's succinct explanations of the mathematical riddles, Victorian literary allusions and Oxford gossip hidden in this most perplexing of children's stories suddenly made everyone see the books as far more than mere "nonsense". This new volume includes over 100 new or updated annotations, more than 100 new color illustrations by such artists as Salvador Dalí, Beatrix Potter, and Ralph Steadman, and a filmography of every Alice-related film.

But Gardner has a competitor: new kid in town David Day is taking a crack at Alice-olatry. Alice Decoded sees Carroll's work as a kind of primer on Victorian education. Although he too connects the various odd characters to their "real life" counterparts, Day contends that the book is a "memory palace, given to Alice as the great gift of an education. It was delivered in coded form because in that age, it was a gift no girl would be permitted to receive in any other way." While that may or may not be true, this is a great read, and like the Gardner, includes beautiful color illustrations, many full page.

Finally for sheer trippy pleasure, take a look at the Salvador Dali Alice. Originally available only as a (very expensive) limited edition, Dali's surrealist take is the perfect complement to Carroll's absurdist situations.

(Lesley W. Adult Services)

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### **Natashya KitchenPuppies says**

Absolutely wonderful!

See my full review here - <http://livinginthekitchenwithpuppies....>

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### **Soph Dunn-Krahn says**

So interesting and very inspiring (?) for some reason.

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## **Kristiina Friman says**

Loved this book. Perfect blend of historical facts and the original text.

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## **Kim says**

Stunning book. Beautiful design.

Last quarter of the book dragged.

Of course, I have no idea how much of the analysis and connections to believe. Entertaining and stimulating, regardless.

Loved the Venn 4-letter, 5-letter & 6-letter systems on page 242. Made me want to quilt that beautiful pattern.

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## **Bradley R. Homer says**

Curiouser and Curiouser..

Having now read the original book the Disney classic film was based off on, with the mind of the author Lewis Carroll being decoded, it makes one wonder.

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## **Shawn says**

I'd probably give this 2.5 stars, but I wouldn't feel comfortable rounding up to give the book a 3-star rating on here.

Before I start critiquing, I'll get my positives out of the way. I loved looking at all the art, and the physical design of the book is really quite stunning. The way the text is laid out on the page, with the text of the novel in one color and author's commentary in other colors, makes it pretty easy to follow and it's nice to look at.

Onto what I didn't care for. When I read literary criticism, I want to come away feeling like I've got some new insight about a text that I had never considered before that makes me read it in a different way. There are a few sections of this book that did this for me, but for the most part it felt like I was reading a biography of Charles Dodgson, which would probably be fascinating, but it's just not what I thought I was signing up for when I picked it up. David Day goes through each chapter and identifies the real-life person or place Dodgson based essentially every character and setting in the novel on, as well as mythological, theological, and/or philosophical antecedents. I think this kind of approach can certainly add value to a literary criticism, but, for me, it's one of the least interesting ways to analyze an author's work.

Something else that bothers me, just because it seems like such an oversight, is that there are at least two times where the author bases a point he's making on the fact that "little" sounds like "Liddell" (the surname of the real-life Alice's family) and that Dodgson is supposedly making a pun. But David Day, who's

Canadian, seems to have forgotten that all of this was taking place in England, where "little" is pronounced with a hard "t" sound, meaning that this "pun" doesn't really make any sense in its original context. Not a big thing, but it just bugged me.

Anyway, if reading about how Charles Dodgson used his first Alice novel to throw shade at his co-workers and public figures of his time sounds interesting, you might want to give this a go. It just wasn't really my cup of tea.

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### **Dorothy says**

A gorgeous scholarly book that is beautiful enough to leave on the coffee table. David Day interweaves the Alice text with illustrations and information about the Oxford people who are portrayed as fantasy figures in the story. This is a book for dipping into, and curling up with in front of the fire on a cold winter evening. A must for all Alice fans.

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### **Megan says**

I really enjoyed this book. It was full of interesting insights and compelling information about one of my favorite stories. The only negative of mine was the format. I much preferred the format of Martin Gardner's "The Annotated Alice." In this book, much of the text is broken up into strange sections around the novel text, and one train of thought is often interrupted by another section of text. This required a high level of concentration just to tell what to read next. As someone who's not super versed in Oxford politics or extreme mythological concepts, this was a bit confusing.

That being said, I still give it four stars because of its massive amount of valid information. Very fascinating for a Carroll fan.

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### **Michael Chen says**

One of the best (and longest) analyses of a classic work that I've ever read. Day has proven that every single word—no matter how ostensibly simple—can house multiple layers of meaning. Both the original text and the lengthy accompanying analysis are stellar.

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### **Dan says**

Probably not the way I'd recommend reading Alice in Wonderland for the first time. (in fact, I'm sure it's not) Too late now, I guess.

A lot of the "decoded" hidden meanings were references to Oxford politics and classical mythology that seemed a bit of a stretch. Eh.

Gives me plenty to think about if I ever want to write a satire children's book where the characters all

represent my co-workers.

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### **Kate says**

Since my childhood, I have been developing something close to an obsession regarding "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". I have numerous different editions of the book, finding it fascinating how different illustrators interpret the work in their own way. As a child, I didn't exactly have the same relationship with it as I do now. Perhaps this is because, to many children, the strange world is quite scary and confusing, as much as it can also be a thing of delight. As I grew up and became more aware of the history surrounding the book, its fascination on me took hold. So, as soon as I saw that this book was to be published, I realised that I would have to buy it to add to my Alice collection.

First of all, the production of the book is absolutely superb. There is no dust jacket to this book, rather the boards are decorated. The size of the book is also good - there is some weight to it. I have to take umbrage with the previous reviewer, as this book was actually published in Canada, not China! The paper is of an excellent quality; rather than being blinding white, they have a slight sepia tone to them. Throughout the whole work, there are plenty of illustrations and reproductions of photographs and details from archives. The text of the tale itself is centred within the middle of the pages, distinct in a different coloured type, with the commentary surrounding it around the edges. This means that the tiresome task of flipping backwards and forwards to see footnotes or endnotes is avoided. And, what insights there are! This book is just fascinating. For anyone who has an interest in Carroll, Alice Liddell or the story on its own would do well to purchase this tome. Day explains how Carroll managed to weave a full classical education into his tale for the young Alice. Yes, there are parts of the admissions by Day which go over my head, as he tries to explain mathematics, but I really don't care! Reading this book is a delight - for a month now I have been dipping into it whenever I get the chance.

Simply put, this would make a wonderful gift for anyone who has an interest in this classic of English literature. It has certainly gained a prized place within my library.

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### **Dianne Landry says**

This was an okay book. The look behind Alice in Wonderland would probably have been more interesting had I now read a biography of Alice Liddell last year. I already know a lot of these facts so it didn't hold me as much as it could have.

That said, it is an enjoyable read for anyone who loves the Alice story.

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### **Satine Dali says**

SHOOK AF! The book itself is beautiful. The information given coinciding page by page with the full wonderland story makes it a very interesting read. Aesthetically pleasing. I found this book in my local library but I am going to buy it because I know it will haunt my dreams with visions of its beauty if I don't. Carrollian AF.

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**Ellie says**

I had to give this book three stars because of the beautiful design. However, the content appeared to me to be written by someone with intellectual ADHD. In his anxiety to assign as many meanings to each character in Wonderland, he rivals Humpty Dumpty. In his view, each character has multiple identities which might or might not relate to each other. It's a little dizzying. I can't recommend it as a good read and suggest people fall back on the wonderful *Annotated Alice* by Martin Gardner or Peter Heath's *The Philosopher's Alice*.

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