



AUDITION EXCERPTS

Please prepare the extract for the role you are most interested in. If you are considering several roles, you do not need to prepare every extract – we may ask you to read another role on the night.

“Assistant” beside characters simply means a member of the production team at the audition will read against you.

1. CHESHIRE CAT (Age range 20+) Good vocals

Focus: Direct audience connection, warmth, wit, confidence and a hint that the Cat knows more than everyone else. (There is no need to “do a cat voice”.)

CHESHIRE CAT: Ah, there you are. I was beginning to wonder if you’d find us. Wonderland can be surprisingly difficult to find. You can’t follow a map, or a compass, or even very good directions. Some people search for years and years and never arrive. Oh, forgive me, I haven’t introduced myself. I’m the Cheshire Cat, and these two delightful troublemakers are my kittens and together, we keep an eye on Wonderland. These days it’s wonderfully peaceful... perhaps a little too peaceful. But in Wonderland, the most extraordinary adventures always begin when everything seems perfectly ordinary. *(Pause. Let the grin arrive slowly.)* I have a feeling things are about to become very interesting indeed.

2. ALICE (Age range 14 to 25)

Focus: Naturalness, curiosity, listening and the confidence to keep asking questions.

ALICE: I’ve always wondered who makes the very first path through a forest. Everyone follows it afterwards, but somebody had to be first. I suppose they were curious enough to see where it went. I’ve always liked people like that. There was a perfectly good path back there... but this one looked much more interesting. So here I am. I may have made a tiny mistake. Actually, I may be just a little bit lost. *(Alice notices the Rabbit looking at his watch.)* Oh! A rabbit... with a pocket watch? Excuse me, this may be an unusual question. Did I just see you looking at a pocket watch?

ASSISTANT – WHITE RABBIT: I certainly did not.

ALICE: You did. You looked directly at it.

ASSISTANT – WHITE RABBIT: I may have glanced.

ALICE: Why would a rabbit need a watch?

ASSISTANT – WHITE RABBIT: Because I don’t want to be late.

ALICE: Late for what?

ASSISTANT – WHITE RABBIT: Everything!

ALICE: Everything?

3. QUEEN OF HEARTS (Age Range 25+) – Strong singer

Focus: Authority, precision, comic seriousness and genuine belief that the Queen is protecting Wonderland.

(The Queen enters and surveys the room. She is not ranting – she expects to be obeyed.)

QUEEN: What is this? (Silence.) I asked a perfectly simple question. What... is... this?

ASSISTANT – HATTER: Home.

QUEEN: Home? This? Look at it – tables that don't match, chairs facing the wrong direction, flowers growing wherever they please, people laughing for absolutely no reason, children dancing without permission. There is nothing organised, nothing controlled, nothing proper.

ASSISTANT – HATTER: Exactly.

QUEEN: You're proud of this?

ASSISTANT – HATTER: Very.

QUEEN: You should be ashamed.

ASSISTANT – HATTER: Why?

QUEEN: *(The Queen picks up an imaginary teapot.)* Look at this. A teapot shaped like a boot. Why?

ASSISTANT – MARCH HARE: Sometimes feet get thirsty.

QUEEN: This is precisely the problem. Every year this kingdom becomes noisier, untidier and more ridiculous. Can't any of you see? I am trying to save Wonderland.

4. WHITE RABBIT (Age 17+) – Strong singer

Focus: Pace, physical comedy, clarity and the sense that something genuinely important is driving the Rabbit.

(Enter as though already late. Use the room.)

WHITE RABBIT: Late! Late! Late! I'm late! I'm impossibly, unbelievably, spectacularly late. *(Checks watch, then points to someone in the audition panel.)* You! What time have you got? No... no... that can't be right. You're all wrong and using different times! Does nobody synchronise anymore? *(Finally reaches the "stage", still flustered.)* There was a time when my life made perfect sense. Breakfast happened before lunch, Mondays arrived on Mondays, everything had its proper place, and every carrot was accounted for. I had routines. I was organised. I had everything planned for the day. Get out of bed, brush two front teeth, eat carrots, kiss my wife and thirty-five children goodbye, go to work, come home, watch reruns of Farmer Wants a Rabbit and go to bed. But today is very different... after the Invitation arrived. *(Realises what has just been said.)* Oh dear. I wasn't supposed to mention that. Forget I said anything. Pretend you didn't hear it. Rewind!

5. HATTER (17+)

Focus: Warmth and sincerity underneath the eccentricity. The change from playful to heartfelt should feel effortless.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: I love celebrations... but the celebration of what exactly? (*A beat. The Hatter looks around at everyone.*)

HATTER: Wonder. That's exactly right. Do you know, grown-ups are very peculiar creatures. When they're little, they ask about everything. Why is the sky blue? Why do birds sing? Why do stars twinkle? Why does the moon follow us home? Then, one day, they decide they already know enough. And that's the saddest day of all.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: Did that happen to you

HATTER: Almost.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: So that's what today is about?

HATTER: Every year we gather to remember. Not facts, not rules – wonder. People think tea is why we gather. It isn't. Tea simply gives your hands something to do while your heart remembers.

ASSISTANT – MARCH HARE: Also, the cake helps. (*Allow the laugh, then continue more quietly.*)

HATTER: When people stop wondering, they stop noticing. When they stop noticing, they stop imagining. When they stop imagining, they stop laughing. And when the laughter goes... Wonderland begins to fade.

6. MARCH HARE (No specific age)

Focus: Fast comic timing, physical energy, playfulness and strong partnership with the Hatter.

ASSISTANT – HATTER: No, no, no! Not there. Not there either. Actually... upside down might be magnificent! Today's tea is upside-down tea.

MARCH HARE: What's upside-down tea

ASSISTANT – HATTER: We drink first. Then we pour.

MARCH HARE: (*The Hare loves this idea.*) Excellent! (*Notices a child carrying imaginary teacups.*) Now carry those teacups exactly the wrong way.

ASSISTANT – CHILD: The wrong way?

MARCH HARE: Of course! If you carry them properly, people will expect tea in them, and we definitely can't do anything expected.

ASSISTANT – HATTER: Expectations are terribly dangerous.

MARCH HARE: Very unhealthy.

ASSISTANT – HATTER: Nearly as dangerous as common sense. (*The Hare reacts as though this is a horrifying thought.*)

MARCH HARE: If it makes perfect sense, do it differently! If it looks organised, move it! If it matches, hide one of them! We have a Celebration to prepare and absolutely no time to become sensible!

7. TWEEDLE DEE (No specific age)

Focus: Rhythm, partnership, wordplay & the confidence to make nonsense sound completely logical.

TWEEDLE DEE: Good morning!

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DUM: Good afternoon!

ASSISTANT – ALICE: Oh my goodness! You frightened me! Who are you?

TWEEDLE DEE: Tweedle Dee!

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DUM: Tweedle Dum!

BOTH / ASSISTANT MAY JOIN: Or is it Tweedle Dee and Tweed Dum? Or Dum Tweedle Dum Dum Dee Dee?

ASSISTANT – ALICE: I'm so confused. Which one of you is Tweedle Dee?

TWEEDLE DEE: Well... it could be me. *(Alice looks away. The Tweedles swap places.)*

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DUM: Or it could be him.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: You two are impossible! Can one of you simply tell me how to get to the Celebration?

TWEEDLE DEE: Certainly.

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DUM: Probably.

TWEEDLE DEE: Unless...

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DUM: We forgot.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: You don't know?

TWEEDLE DEE: Oh, we know. We just don't always know at the same time.

8. TWEEDLE DUM (No specific age)

Focus: Comic timing with a sudden ability to become unexpectedly thoughtful – then bounce straight back to nonsense.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: Well, how do I get there
(The Tweedles suddenly become very serious.)

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DEE: You're standing

TWEEDLE DUM: Exactly...

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DEE: Where you need to be.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: And?

TWEEDLE DUM: That's it.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: That doesn't tell me anything.

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DEE: Doesn't it?

TWEEDLE DUM: Sometimes people spend their whole lives trying to get somewhere else

ASSISTANT – TWEEDLE DEE: ...when they're already standing in the right place.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: That's actually rather lovely.

TWEEDLE DUM: Thank you.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: A White Rabbit mentioned the Invitation.
(Immediate change – respectful, almost secretive.)

TWEEDLE DUM: He told you about that

ASSISTANT – ALICE: He told me not to ask about it. Which naturally makes me want to ask even more. *(The Tweedles beam.)*

TWEEDLE DUM: She's definitely meant to be here.

9. SLEEPY DORMOUSE (No specific age)

Focus: Physical comedy, precise pauses, facial expression and the contrast between impossibly slow and suddenly alert.

(The Dormouse is almost asleep before the scene starts.)

ASSISTANT – ALICE: Hello? Excuse me?

(The Dormouse nearly walks into something. Alice guides them away. Eventually the Dormouse settles down and starts snoring.) Well, you certainly seem comfortable. *(Alice wakes the Dormouse.)*

DORMOUSE: Oooo... I'm sorry. I must have dozed off.

ASSISTANT – ALICE: To be honest, you never really woke up. My name's Alice.

DORMOUSE: Hello Alice, lovely to meet you. I'm... *(Falls asleep. Wakes a few seconds later.)*

DORMOUSE: Sorry... was I saying something

ASSISTANT – ALICE: You were going to give me your name.

DORMOUSE: Ohhh, my name. My name is... *(Falls asleep again.)*

ASSISTANT – CHESHIRE CAT: Oh, for goodness sake. He's the Sleepy Dormouse. Sleepy Dormouse, wake up – we have a guest!

DORMOUSE: I wasn't asleep. I was just testing the gravitational pull of my eyelids and today they are very heavy. Wonderland? No, that's too loud a name. I prefer Slumber-land. Tell me, Alice... do you happen to have a pocket full of quiet? The birds are chirping at an absolutely unreasonable volume today.

OPTIONAL YOUNG-PERFORMER READING

Young performers do not need to prepare this in advance. It can be used on the night for anyone interested in a featured speaking moment.

ASSISTANT – QUEEN: Where is my speech? *(A tiny Card steps forward very carefully.)*

YOUNG PERFORMER – LITTLE CARD: Your Majesty... I was holding it... for safety.

ASSISTANT – QUEEN: Excellent initiative. Terrible execution. *(The Card tries very hard not to react.)*

ASSISTANT – MARCH HARE: Carry those teacups exactly the wrong way!

YOUNG PERFORMER – FOREST CHILD: The wrong way?

ASSISTANT – MARCH HARE: Of course! We definitely can't do anything expected.

(React as though this makes perfect sense, then hurry away with the imaginary teacups.)