

## V—ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR

At last the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth and addressed Alice in a languid, sleepy voice.

"Who are *you*?" said the Caterpillar.



Alice replied, rather shyly, "I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then."

"What do you mean by that?" said the Caterpillar, sternly. "Explain yourself!"

"I can't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, sir," said Alice, "because I'm not myself, you see—being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing." She drew herself up and said very gravely, "I think you ought to tell me who *you* are, first."

"Why?" said the Caterpillar.

As Alice could not think of any good reason and the Caterpillar seemed to be in a *very* unpleasant state of mind, she turned away.

"Come back!" the Caterpillar called after her. "I've something important to say!" Alice turned and came back again.

"Keep your temper," said the Caterpillar.

"Is that all?" said Alice, swallowing down her anger as well as she could.

"No," said the Caterpillar.

It unfolded its arms, took the hookah out of its mouth again, and said, "So you think you're changed, do you?"

"I'm afraid, I am, sir," said Alice. "I can't remember things as I used—and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!"

"What size do you want to be?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Oh, I'm not particular as to size," Alice hastily replied, "only one doesn't like changing so often, you know. I should like to be a *little* larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind," said Alice. "Three inches is such a wretched height to be."

"It is a very good height indeed!" said the Caterpillar angrily, rearing itself upright as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).

In a minute or two, the Caterpillar got down off the mushroom and crawled away into the grass, merely remarking, as it went, "One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter."

"One side of *what*? The other side of *what*?" thought Alice to herself.

"Of the mushroom," said the Caterpillar, just as if she had asked it aloud; and in another moment, it was out of sight.

Alice remained looking thoughtfully at the mushroom for a minute, trying to make out which were the two sides of it. At last she stretched her arms 'round it as far as they would go, and broke off a bit of the edge with each hand.

"And now which is which?" she said to herself, and nibbled a little of the right-hand bit to try the effect. The next moment she felt a violent blow underneath her chin—it had struck her foot!

She was a good deal frightened by this very sudden change, as she was shrinking rapidly; so she set to work at once to eat some of the other bit. Her chin was pressed so closely against her foot that there was hardly room to open her mouth; but she did it at last and managed to swallow a morsel of the left-hand bit....

"Come, my head's free at last!" said Alice; but all she could see, when she looked down, was an immense length of neck, which seemed to rise like a stalk out of a sea of green leaves that lay far below her.

"Where *have* my shoulders got to? And oh, my poor hands, how is it I can't see you?" She was delighted to find that her neck would bend about easily in any direction, like a serpent. She had just succeeded in curving it down into a graceful zigzag and was going to dive in among the leaves, when a sharp hiss made her draw back in a hurry—a large pigeon had flown into her face and was beating her violently with its wings.



"Serpent!" cried the Pigeon.

"I'm *not* a serpent!" said Alice indignantly. "Let me alone!"

"I've tried the roots of trees, and I've tried banks, and I've tried hedges," the Pigeon went on, "but those serpents! There's no pleasing them!"

Alice was more and more puzzled.

"As if it wasn't trouble enough hatching the eggs," said the Pigeon, "but I must be on the

look-out for serpents, night and day! And just as I'd taken the highest tree in the wood," continued the Pigeon, raising its voice to a shriek, "and just as I was thinking I should be free of them at last, they must needs come wriggling down from the sky! Ugh, Serpent!"

"But I'm *not* a serpent, I tell you!" said Alice. "I'm a—I'm a—I'm a little girl," she added rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through that day.

"You're looking for eggs, I know *that* well enough," said the Pigeon; "and what does it matter to me whether you're a little girl or a serpent?"

"It matters a good deal to *me*," said Alice hastily; "but I'm not looking for eggs, as it happens, and if I was, I shouldn't want *yours*—I don't like them raw."

"Well, be off, then!" said the Pigeon in a sulky tone, as it settled down again into its nest. Alice crouched down among the trees as well as she could, for her neck kept getting entangled among the branches, and every now and then she had to stop and untwist it. After awhile she remembered that she still held the pieces of mushroom in her hands, and she set to work very carefully, nibbling first at one and then at the other, and growing sometimes taller and sometimes shorter, until she had succeeded in bringing herself down to her usual height.

It was so long since she had been anything near the right size that it felt quite strange at first. "The next thing is to get into that beautiful garden—how *is* that to be done, I wonder?" As she said this, she came suddenly upon an open place, with a little house in it about four feet high. "Whoever lives there," thought Alice, "it'll never do to come upon them *this* size; why, I should frighten them out of their wits!" She did not venture to go near the house till she had brought herself down to nine inches high.