

## Animal Themes

Both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Alice Through The Looking-Glass* are replete with a menagerie of weird and wonderful animals.

Alice



Medley of Tenniel's *Alice* illustrations. Miss Whitehead (-1887).

There are numerous animals, both realistic and fabulous, in every turn of the *Alice* plots. For example, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* begins with the White Rabbit leading Alice down the rabbit hole. He then takes her through the plot, ending up as the king's chamberlain running the trial in the final chapter, which features a mock parliamentary caucus among a curious array of animals near the beginning of the story.



Alice trying to play croquet with a flamingo. John Tenniel (1865).

"Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in her life; it was all ridges and furrows; the balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets live flamingos, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and to stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches."

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapter 8.*

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Long before the time of Alice and Eleanor, King Henry I is reported to have kept a menagerie of wild animals in the grounds at Woodstock Castle.

Eleanor



Remains of Henry II's Palace of Woodstock (built in the 11th century).

Henry I was renowned for the menagerie he kept at his palace at Woodstock (an early version of Woburn Abbey, which introduced wild animals as an attraction in English stately homes in the 20th century). There is mention of animals as exotic as leopards, lions, lynxes, camels and even a porcupine at the castle in the chronicles of the time. A manatee bone and the remains of a raccoon were found in an excavation of the Old Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, which was the site of the town palace of Henry I.

Animal imagery was important to the people of the times, becoming widespread after being introduced as images on the shields and armour of this era. Both Eleanor and Henry inherited the lion as their heraldic symbol, which were combined to become three lions in the emblem of their son, Richard the Lionheart.



Animals featured in the Royal Arms of England (1198-1340).