

## Imprisonment

In a sense, the whole first part of *Alice in Wonderland* is an imprisonment in a palatial context from which she is trying to escape by finding the key to the door to the garden.

Alice



Alice, cramped in the Rabbit's house. John Tenniel (1865).

The entry into the palatial confinement of the underground domain is the fall down the rabbit hole, whose initial themes derived not from Carroll's imagination but from Alice Liddell's French reader at the time, *La Bagatelle*, which contained a series of lessons entitled 'The Rabbit', 'The Fall', and 'The Little Girl Who is Always Crying' and so on (Hargreaves, 1932), prefiguring the initial sequence scenes in *Alice in Wonderland*. In Carroll's rendition, she soon finds herself trapped in a long hallway:

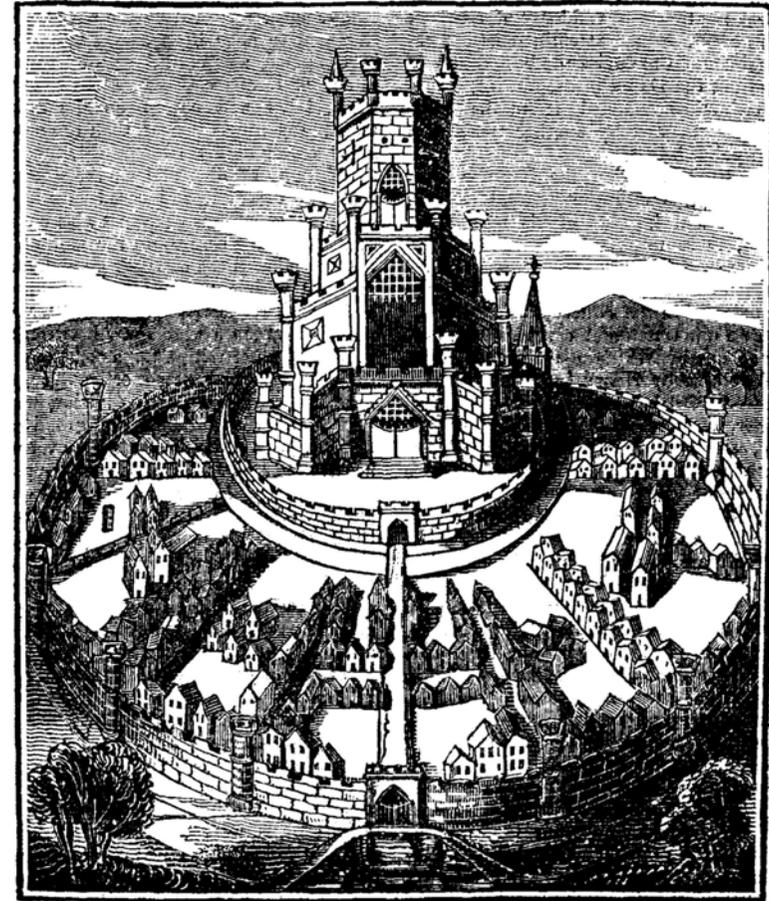
"There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

...

## Imprisonment

Eleanor was imprisoned by Henry II in 'Salisbury Tower' from 1174 until his death in 1189, after abetting the failed rebellion of their first son, Henry the Young King.

Eleanor



Old Sarum Castle (-15th century woodcut).

It was Eleanor's role in collaborating with her eldest son, Henry the Young King, in a rebellion against his father, Henry II, that led him to imprison her from 1174 until his death in 1189, principally in a location designated as 'Salisbury Tower' (Kelly, 1950, p. 184). Though generally presumed to have

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; ‘and even if my head would go through,’ thought poor Alice, ‘it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only know how to begin.’ For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible. There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes.

...

After a while, finding that nothing more happened, she decided on going into the garden at once; but, alas for poor Alice! when she got to the door, she found she had forgotten the little golden key, and when she went back to the table for it, she found she could not possibly reach it: she could see it quite plainly through the glass, and she tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table, but it was too slippery; and when she had tired herself out with trying, the poor little thing sat down and cried.”

*Alice in Wonderland, Chapter 1.*



St Frideswide stained-glass window in Christ Church, Oxford. Edward Burne-Jones (1858).

been in Salisbury, no such tower is known by this name. The imprisonment is often attributed as being in the castle of Old Sarum (Salisbury). On the other hand, there was a ‘Salisbury Tower’ at one corner of Windsor Castle at the time, and Eleanor is later known to have summoned her other sons to Windsor (in 1184 according to Kelly, 1950) to plot against Henry. On this view, therefore, Eleanor’s imprisonment may have been primarily in the Salisbury Tower at Windsor Castle for these 15 years.



Salisbury Tower, Windsor Castle (12-13th century).