

Year 5

Once upon a time, there were two kids in a field of flowers.
Where they would secretly come play for hours and hours.

One was a girl named Alice,
A Daughter of a Servant.
A Girl loyal to the Crown,
That does her duties so fervent.

The other was a boy named Arthur,
The Son to the King,
A wannabe warrior,
Practicing the sword, they swing

They were an unlikely pair,
A Commoner and a Prince,
But as far back as babies,
They have been inseparable since.

As they played with the daisies,
And daffodils too,
The young prince had an idea
Straight out of the blue

Calling Alice,
He wrapped a flower round her finger
Tying a makeshift ring
The warmth of his hand lingered.

Alice wondered why
The prince would do this.
For despite her age,
She wasn't clueless.

To give a girl a ring,
Was to ask for marriage
At least that's what her parents said
One night in a carriage.

Arthur couldn't care, though
For he was a prince
And though he was naive
His words did not mince.

He was her friend
And he wanted to be by her side
Whether as a servant or noble
He would like her as a bride.

It was a childish wish,
A naive little thought
But as a kid herself,
Those kind words she did bought.

And right then and there
She gave him a kiss
Their lips so warm
They felt much bliss.

It was a bond so strong.
It almost felt like fate.
But as time marched forward
So did something terrible await.

Year 6

It wasn't long before Alice
Was taken from her home
The guards were quick.
And no longer could she roam.

For she had magic.
Sparkles straight from her hands.
Logic-defying power
All at her command.

She didn't ask for this gift
A White Elephant so nasty
Now she's locked in a cage
So filthy and raspy.

She wanted to leave.
To see her mom and dad
To see anyone who could help
And not make her sad.

So when Arthur came

She was so overjoyed
She thought she would save him
Like Helen in Troy

But her Prince looked glum
His head down low
His eyes were sullen
And his breathing was slow

Alice confused
Asked what was wrong
Only for Arthur to say
That she must play along.

His father, Uther, said:
"It's for the good of the country!"
"To combat the enemy!"
The prince asked humbly.

"Please lend your strength, Alice!"
The Prince, he pleaded.
For the sake of the Kingdom
Her strength was needed.

Alice was hesitant.
Expected of a kid.
She was a servant that swept floors.
That's what she did.

She was no warrior.
They both knew that.
But Alice was a Mage
And that was a fact.

As someone who wielded magic,
They were expected to do good.
To march into battle,
As good soldiers should.

Still, Alice was scared.
She didn't want to fight.
She begged and pleaded with Arthur,
Who was her shining light.

But no matter how much
She whined and begged
Her prince was silent,
And he was not swayed.

She was to be sent to battle,
Whether she liked it or not.
Even if she were dragged,
To war and brought.

And so the young girl
Was sent to War.
Her cries of anguish were silenced
By the rain that poured.

Year 7

Two years passed
Since she was sent away
No longer a child

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That can go out and play

Forced to train hard
Under a strict regimen
Where one false move
Could lead to punishment

The last year was harsh
But this one was worse
She wasn't sure she would make another
If she didn't die first.

She wasn't even that special
Her Magic Made Gears
Weird Cogs and Springs
That ringed in your ears.

She wasn't sure why
No matter what she thought

Those metal gears popped
Much like a blot

So the idea of combat
Made her feel sick and weak
With such a worthless power
Her Future seemed bleak

But not all was bad
She managed to find a friend
A much older mage
That looked like age ten

She was experienced
She was skilled
And under her Tutelage
Alice felt fulfilled.

She acted like a sister,
One she never had
Under her wing
Maybe life wouldn't be so bad.

Year 8

When Alice was training
She noticed something strange
Another girl acting funny
Almost deranged

She was a veteran mage
One of many wars
An experienced warrior
And a faithful member of the corps

So seeing her like this
Filled Alice with fear
How could this happen
To one of her peers?

It was a question that plagued her
All day and all night
Until her mentor
Helped deal with her plight

She told Alice: "This is natural."
But how can that be?
She seemed fine before
As far as she could see.

She continued. "Magic is fickle."
"It's not as wondrous as it seems."
"It is a dangerous power."
"That brings more nightmares than dreams."

"For magic is corruptive."
"It gnaws at your mind."
"It flips your morals."
"And your sanity declines."

"With each use..."
"The Crystal Heart goes stronger."
"And when you hit a breaking point."
"You will be human no longer."

"Witches!" She Screamed.
"That's what you'll become."
"A monster of Humanity"
"And a threat of Kingdoms."

"A Witch?" Alice repeated.
Still quite confused.
It sounded horrible.
And she was not amused.

"With Colorful Eyes."
"And Teeth so sharp."
"These are the signs."
"That you must hark."

"But if that's the case..."
Alice thought for a sec,
A grim thought entered
And she wanted to check.

"We are magical girls, right?"
"That we are."
"But if that's the case..."

"Why go so far?"

"It's dangerous to use magic."

"So why make us use it?"

"If we turn into monsters?"

"Why do they commit?"

Her mentor sighed.

Understanding her concern

But she also knew Alice

Had to learn.

"It's because of King Uther."

"And his desire to protect."

"His kingdom from all enemies."

"That wish to subject."

"The other countries"

"Had powerful foes as well"

"And if they came here."

"Their kingdom would be hell."

"He knows it is wrong."

"But their power is too great."

"So he took action."

"Before it was too late."

"To Protect the People."

"From daughters to sons."

"It was a sacrifice he took."

"To protect everyone."

Alice nodded in understanding

But it didn't seem right

These girls were children

Some with futures so bright.

It felt wrong to throw them into battle

Knowing they could become monsters.

To see her friends lose their minds.

As their madness fosters.

Her mentor grabbed her shoulder.

"It'll be alright."

"For the King had a plan."
"To deal with the blight."

"So when a Girl starts to lose it."
"Before it's too late."
"They're taken by the King's Men."
"In order to graduate!"

"Graduate?" Alice repeated.
Much like a parrot.
She didn't know what it meant.
Nor of its merit.

"Graduation is something special."
"It is a wondrous sight."
"Where they're free to leave this place."
"And no longer fight."

"Really?" Alice perked up.
Excited at the news.
Knowing there's an end,
Killed a bit of her blues.

But wait, Alice stopped
It sounded too good to be true.
"What happens to the girls"
"That head on through?"

"I'm not sure."
Her mentor replied
"We aren't allowed to leave"
"Even if we tried."

"Remember the cuffs?"
"Right there on your wrists?"
"They nullify our magic."
"And we can't throw fists."

"So we can't escape."
"Or find out the Truth."
"And here we will remain."
"For the rest of our youth."

"So why say Graduation is good?"

Alice inquired.

"Something horrible could await"

"Who knows what transpires."

"That may be true."

Her mentor nodded.

"But I see no point"

"For this to be prodded."

"It's important to stay positive."

"To look on the bright side."

"To keep your head low."

"And swallow your pride."

"I want to believe in the light."

"At the end of this tunnel."

"So I'll believe that Graduation is good."

"While my mind is functional."

Alice grimaced. "So that's it."

"You just make up a lie."

"Something to keep you going."

"Before they send us out to die?"

"Indeed." Her mentor nodded.

"There's so little we can do."

"But if I can't try to make hope for us."

"May I ask, who?"

Alice wanted to snap back

To scream something or shout

But no matter what

The words couldn't come out.

Year 9

Another year passed

And her Mentor was away

Sent to parts unknown

To Join the Fray

As for Alice

She was near close

Her training was finished

But it's nothing to boast

It was slow and hard
Especially for her
But even if it was difficult
It felt like a blur

And now she was ready
To fight for her country
Though she was still scared
If she could put it bluntly.

Her mind was mixed.
Welled with hesitation and pride
A part of her was determined
While another wanted to hide.

But there was no choice, after all
She was a mage and a soldier, too
The country will make her fight
If that's the last thing they'll do.

Alice sighed
Looking around
Eyeing fellow mages
All over the grounds

There were mostly new girls
New Recruits and all
Future troops being led
Right down the hall

One such recruit
Bumps into her right then and there
Before an angry guard
Pulled the recruit by the hair.

It was a horrible sight
But nothing new
Alice herself was a victim
And was subjected to it too

But as the recruit was dragged
Alice saw a peculiar sight

Right there on the ground
Was a stuffed rabbit bruised and white

Seeing the toy,
Alice had a hunch
And so she found the recruit
Right around lunch.

The recruit was scared
Just like her past self
But much like her mentor
She decided to help.

"Hey, this is yours, right?"
Alice pulled out the Rabbit.
"Guards will confiscate when seen"
"So don't make this a habit."

The recruit's eyes widened
As she grabbed the Toy.
And with that wide smile.
The Recruit felt joy.

"Thank you so much."
The Recruit continued to grin.
"It was the only thing I could bring."
"Before I got in."

"Is that so?" Alice chuckled
"It's good to have for bed."
"But as for me."
"I brought this big bow on my head."

"It's a lovely bow."
The Recruit praised Alice.
"You look like a rabbit."
"Oh, wait, sorry, did that sound callous?"

Alice laughed, "Not at all, not at all."
"I see what you mean."
"But if my ears are the longest."
"Does that make me the rabbit queen?"

This got the recruit laughing

Before they were hushed by the guards
Their little fun was spoiled
And the conversation was marred.

Still, the two girls
Looked at one another.
“My name is Alice.”
“What’s yours, if I bother?”

“Call me Marchen.”
The Recruit eagerly replied.
“Nice to meet you,” Alice nodded
And they walked down with Stride.

Year 10

Today was the day
She would be sent to war
To defend her home
All that and more

Yet despite her preparations
All her training and hard work
Deep down, she was nervous
About going berserk.

A part of her wanted
To escape and flee
But another part knew
That this was meant to be

So with a soft prayer
And a farewell to Marchen
She got her blade ready
And prepared for charging

Year 11

She was away from home
For over a year
In a land unknown
Her heart filled with fear

She said she was ready

She said she was prepared
But under real battle
She nearly died by a hair.

The enemy had dragons
With the Knights up on top
That spewed elemental fury
At them nonstop.

Many allies were battered
And also bruised
This war of attrition was almost worse
Than when they were abused.

Alice would've lost
She would've died
Until a portal opened
And saved her life.

It was there she met a girl
With the ears of a cat
With a large, mischievous grin
What's up with that?

"Hey! Hello!"
"My name is Chesha!"
"You may not know me"
"But Nice to Meetcha!"

"Uh, hello?"
"My name is Alice."
"I don't know you."
"But you bear no malice."

Chesha grinned. "Oh, is that so?"
"But I could be lyin'"
"For all you know, I could be a traitor."
"Sent for spying."

"That may be true."
"And I can agree."
"But my mentor told me to be positive."
"As much as I can be."

"So, while I can say you are distrustful."
"That you are one who deceits."
"The fact is, you saved me."
"And I can still stand on my feet."

Chesha pouted,
"I guess the joke is over."
"You're right, I'm a friend."
"And that's your closure."

"That's good to know."
Alice nodded.
"But what's with the ears?"
"Are you perhaps modded?"

"Yeah..." Chesha sighed.
"Merlin did this, the King's Alchemist."
"And because of him"
"I crave milk and fish."

"Well, that doesn't sound too bad."
Alice reassured.
"Compared to the other experiments."
"Your mods seem pure."

"Thanks, I guess."
Chesha's shoulders drooped.
"But I still feel so weird."
"Around the others in the group."

"Eh, let them think that."
"Well, whoever is left."
"Your magic is cool."
"And pretty adept."

"Well, thanks, Alice."
"Your magic is cool too."
"Though chucking gears ain't flashy."
"You do you."

Year 12

Six years have passed
Since she was enlisted

Turned to a soldier
And her life became twisted

Yet despite the bleakness
There were rays of light
With new friends to count on
Things seemed alright.

After the enemies were repelled
They went back to base
Where she reunited with her mentor
And met face to face.

She introduced her mentor
To Marchen and Chesha
They got along faster
Than a bear that would getcha

Today was one of the few holidays
That they would get
A break from all the fighting
With no need to sweat.

Alas, in the canteen
It was the same old gruel
It wasn't anything sweet
But it provided fuel

The thought made her hungry
She missed dessert
She knew the camp had no snacks
But some cake wouldn't hurt

If graduation was good,
And they could stop fighting,
She would want to throw a party
That's worth inviting.

They would sit around the table,
Drinking Tea and Eating Sweets
Talking about things
That just sounded neat.

Chesha and Marchen are there

Her mentor too
And they would wear dresses
Green, Pink, and Blue

But wait, she realized
What about Arthur?
From all the years away,
Would he even bother?

After all this time
There was no visit
No sign of the prince
Or any news explicit.

I wonder if he still cares?
She couldn't help but think
As she gripped her ring finger
Her cheeks turned pink.

Her sudden demeanor
Brought attention to her friends
And they began to tease her
With seemingly no end.

Year 13

Another year passed
Back into the fray
Where they would fight
All night and all day

Unlike last time
She was prepared
She wasn't as horrified
Though she was still scared

But that fear was nothing
At least not with friends
And together they would pull through
Until the end

And so another battle ended
The enemy wiped out
They had grown stronger

Without a doubt

Though Marchen was new
Fresh from training
She pulled her own weight
Without restraining

Chesha was helpful
Albeit playful
Doing well to provide cover
From the enemy rifles

Her mentor though
Felt a little off
Her demeanor seemed weird
And she started to cough

She said she was fine
That she was ok
But from her pale complexion
It didn't seem that way

Her mentor sighed
Knowing she can't lie
So she spoke the truth
That her usefulness has died

She showed her mouth
And Alice saw fangs
Her eyes were glowing
Beneath her bangs

Alice was confused
Before she figured it out
That her mentor was suffering
And that her madness would sprout

Yet despite Alice's dismay
Her Mentor reassured
That she will be fine
And that she must endure.

She will leave soon
No need to cry

For she's done fighting
And her graduation is nigh

Alice was still sad
Her expression glum
Cuz she was her friend
And her closest chum

Still, to see her mentor
In a frenzied state
Filled Alice with dread
And made appreciate

That they can still talk
To share this moment
Before it's all gone
And a return to torment

"Would you really be fine?"
"Is there any other way?"
Alice wanted to know
If her mentor could stay.

"I don't know, sadly."
Her mentor said with doubt.
"A known cure for madness."
"There is without."

A tear falls from Alice's face.
"No, this cannot be."
"I don't want you to go."
"Can't you see?"

"It'll be fine."
"You are strong."
"Despite everyone's doubts."
"You've proved them wrong."

"Their doubts?" Alice asked.
Clearly confused.
"People thought you would die."
Her mentor replied, amused.

"That's not funny!"

Alice frowned and pouted.
"This war is no game."
"Are their minds clouded?"

"Maybe."
"I know mine is, no doubt."
"But despite it all"
"Your prowess did sprout."

"You're strong now."
"Tough like a steed."
"You have what it takes."
"To take the lead."

"Are you sure I can do this?"
Alice asked, filled with doubt.
"I still believe"
"I'm only good as a scout."

"Nonsense!"
Her mentor stood up and shouted
"You're strong, no worry!"
"It's not to be doubted!"

"Then can you promise?"
Alice looked her in the eyes.
"That when I graduate,
This isn't goodbye!"

"That's a promise!"
"We'll meet again!"
"We'll have treats!"
"And play pretend!"

With a shared laugh
The girls made a vow
And soon, next month
She had one final bow

Year 14

It was sudden
News out the blue
Word out of nowhere

Nothing she knew

So when she learned
That Arthur was here
She dropped everything
And sped off like a deer

But when she came to her prince
And saw him face to face
She realized this reunion
Wasn't something to embrace.

For Arthur looked different
He was fourteen years old
The boy was now taller
And his expression was cold.

Alice stood,
Her face stunned with shock
Under these circumstances
She couldn't help but gawk.

She awkwardly said hi,
And greeted her old friend
Wondering if he remembered her
And the days they spent

A melancholic smile
Crawled upon his face
Then Arthur walked up
And put her in an embrace

"It's been a long time, Alice."
Arthur spoke softly.
"I hope things are well."
"Did the guards treat you awfully?"

"N-No! Everything's fine."
Alice did deny.
As much as she wanted to say.
She didn't want to cry.

"Are you sure?"
Arthur once again asked.

"Because the actions of the facility"
"Feel a little masked."

"They're harsh, yes."
Alice agreed.
"But after a while"
"Things took up speed."

"I'm a commander now."
"Leader of a team."
"And I have new friends."
"It feels like a dream."

Alice's honeyed words
Earned a smile.
She hoped her little lie.
Would last a while.

"Is that so?"
"In that case, it's all good."
"I was honestly worried"
"Things weren't as they should."

"So what brings you here?"
"To visit after all this time?"
"Have you come to see me?"
"Your future bride."

Upon hearing those words
Arthur looked away
He scratched his head
Unsure of what to say

Things were quiet
Unnervingly so
And when Arthur finally spoke
Her heart took a blow

"I have a fiancé now."
"And it's not you."
"My father, King Uther,"
"Found someone new"

"But why!?" Alice shouted.

Flabbergasted and shocked.
“Did our promise mean nothing!?”
She couldn’t help but gawk.

“I’m sorry, Alice.”
“But it was a childish wish.”
“A naive little thought”
“That had to be squished.”

“But... But...”
Alice just muttered.
Unable to find words.
She all but sputtered.

“I’m sorry once more.”
“There’s nothing I could do.”
“This marriage was arranged.”
“And the engagement went through.”

“Guinevere is my bride now.”
“That is a fact.”
“And as the prince.”
“I must fulfill this pact.”

“For without this alliance.”
“There will be civil war.”
“And the casualties of our kingdom.”
“Will build up more.”

“I see...”
Alice sullenly cried.
“So were all those sweet words.”
“Nothing but lies.”

“There were no lies.”
“But I have to look at reality.”
“You are a magical girl.”
“Blessed with Immortality.”

“Look at yourself.”
“You haven’t aged a day.”
“Your body is like a doll.”
“Made of Porcelain Clay.”

"Whereas I have grown."
"Both bigger and taller"
"And to me, you keep looking."
"Smaller and smaller."

"I care for you, Alice."
"But I can't love a child."
"To marry a six-year-old."
"Would be utterly wild!"

"But I'm not six,"
"I'm fourteen!"
"I'm as old as you!"
"If that can't be seen!"

"Alice, no."
"That's not right."
"You still look the same."
"Whereas I've grown in height."

"But that's-" Alice just stopped.
Her words fell on her tongue.
As these revelations dropped.
And the cold words rung

She ran to a Guard
A former farmer
And took a good look
Through his shining armor

One look and Alice
Fell down to her knees
Her expression shellshocked
And her body did freeze

Arthur was right
Much to her dismay
Despite being older
She hadn't aged a day

She was quiet, sullen
Looked cold with no life
The hard truth dawned on her
That she would be no wife

It was then that Arthur came
And put a hand on her shoulder
“It’s ok, we’re friends..”
“Even if I’m older.”

Alice was silent.
Alice was cold.
And then the Mage
Did something bold.

SMACK!

She slapped the Prince
Right then and there.
Beating his face red
And giving him a glare.

The guards moved in
Ready to attack
But the Prince raised his hand
And told them to stay back.

“It’s fine,” Arthur assured.
“It’s what I deserve.”
“For playing with a girl’s heart.”
“And having the nerve.”

Alice looked on
Filled with Anger and Sorrow.
And then bolted away
Where her Prince could not follow

Year 15

Ever since then
Alice focused on battle
Slaying foe after foe
As if they were cattle.

She wanted release
She needed to vent
She needed some relief
From the feelings she pent.

"Commander Alice."
"The sky is getting dark."
"It's time to relax."
"You've made your mark."

Alice was quiet.
And looked at the newcomer
It was the new mage
That arrived in the summer.

Trumpetta, her name
Was a mage of cards
A strict yet weird girl
That made paper guards.

"Hello, Trumpetta."
Alice softly replied.
She wiped off some blood
That had all but dried.

"Is it time to quit now?"
Alice did ask.
"Yes indeed, Alice,"
"You've completed your task."

"But I feel like I can do more."
"There could be more enemies afoot."
"It wouldn't be too much,"
"To go take a look."

"That may be true."
"But this is not safe,"
"You must keep yourself healthy."
"For your own sake."

"I feel fine, Trumpetta."
"Can't you see?"
"We're mages who heal."
"Like mighty trees."

"Yes, but you told me."
"That our magic is cursed."
"You could speed up your madness."

“Or even worse.”

Alice tried to object
But her tongue held still
“Oh, right, I did say that.”
“But I don’t feel ill.”

She ran to a puddle
Full of blood, so soaked
To check on her face
With hair, she stroked.

Her eyes were normal
And no sharp teeth
She checked twice, then thrice
For no surprises underneath

With a sigh of relief,
Alice dusted herself off
She seemed perfectly fine
But then she let out a cough

It could’ve been a cold
It could’ve been the flu
But there was a small chance it was something
She all but knew

Turning to Trumpetta
Alice but smiled
“Seems like I’m getting cold.”
“No need to be riled.”

The Card Witch looked on
With Deep Concern
But from the past months of work
She did learn

That her commander, Alice.
Was by no means weak
That girl was a warrior
Despite looking so meek

It was hard to believe Chesha
About the start of her career

The Alice she knew now was nothing
Like the one she did hear

Though perhaps it was due
To a dark revelation
About Alice's Sadness
And her growing Frustration

From what she could see
Alice just kept fighting
To keep her mind occupied
As a form of denying

She wanted to help
But she was unsure
How to help her handle it
With no possible cure.

The King's Men didn't care
They all saw a weapon
A useful pawn for battle
With no reason to step in

"At least I got her to stop."
Trumpetta sighed.
It was a sign of progress
To show that she tried.

But she knew this wouldn't last.
Not forever.
There's only one road for mages
At the end of this endeavor.

She can only hope.
She can only pray.
That their commander can stay with them.
For another day.

Year 17

More Battles were won
Against Enemies from the East
But for Alice, this was no time
To Enjoy a Feast

Because in the next morning
Just when she woke up
She saw something
That almost made her blow up

Her Eyes, once brown
Were now a bright shade of Blue
The changes were growing
That much she knew

She was surprised, though
As it's been two years
Since she started showing signs
That much was clear

Yet despite her symptoms
She kept moving forward
She kept fighting on
And to her own accord

They said Mages don't last
Their corruption too strong
Said to last ten years
Before things go wrong.

Yet she was a mage
One over Twelve
Did her corruption stall?
Or was her graduation shelved?

Whatever the case,
She didn't feel right
Maybe she'll feel better
If she went for a bite

But in the canteen,
She got a lot of stares
They moved away from her
Scooting their chairs

Sitting at the table,
With all of her friends
They were toying with their utensils

And other odds and ends.

But when they noticed Alice

Their demeanor changed

“Probably my eyes.”

“That’s why I’m Strange.”

“Sorry, guys.”

Alice spoke mournful.

“But I fear my time is up.”

“Before I become harmful.”

“This can’t be true.”

Marchen spoke with worry.

Her voice so meek,

And her tone was so weary.

“I don’t want it to be.”

Alice spoke low.

“But soon it might be time.”

“For me to go.”

“Took long enough.”

Chesha suddenly smiled.

“With you not around.”

“We don’t walk in file.”

“How can you say that!?”

Marchen stood up in rage.

“Are you really happy for Alice?”

“To just leave the stage!?”

“She’s obviously coping.”

Trumpetted objected.

“We knew this day was coming.”

“So she’s being collected.”

“That obvious?”

Chesha did frown.

“I’m just trying my best.”

“To not act so down.”

“Chesha is right.”

Alice added on.

"What but why!?"
Marchen didn't want her gone.

"We are soldiers."
Alice explained
"Sent out to battle."
"That's why we trained."

"We die in the field."
"Or we graduate, you see."
"That's our end."
"As the King's Decree."

"That isn't fair!"
Marchen did shout.
Her feelings were of outrage
Mixed in with doubt.

"You've gotten this far!"
"Maybe you can still fight back!"
"You're a tough leader."
"You can't just crack!"

"Nothing lasts forever."
"Not you or me."
"But think of it this way."
"Soon I'll be free."

Marchen was silent,
Ready to cry.
It was clear that she didn't want
To go and say goodbye.

"Hey, don't fret."
"I'm still here."
"So let's spend more time together."
"No need to fear."

"You girls are strong."
"You're some of the best."
"So when I graduate, I hope."
"You take care of the rest."

"Let's meet again."

"On the other side."

"I'll be waiting for you all."

"With a grin so wide."

"We'll go shopping for toys."

"We'll go shopping for dresses."

"We'll eat lots of cake."

"And make plenty of messes."

"So promise me this."

"Can you girls stay alive?"

"Can you kick the enemy's butts?"

"And go into overdrive?"

The girls were silent

Until they all smiled.

And hugged Alice so tight.

They smothered the child.

"We promise." They spoke

At the same time at once

There was no need to hide feelings

Or put up fronts.

"Then it's decided."

Alice spoke proudly.

She had a confident attitude.

And her disposition loudly.

"Until I'm gone."

"Until I go away."

"We'll remain friends."

"That much will stay."

It was a childish wish,

A naive little thought

But as they were forever young,

Those kind words they did bought.

It was a bond so strong.

It almost felt like fate.

But as time marched forward

So did something terrible await.

Year 19

This was the worst one
The worst year of her life
As the clock ticked down
Like the edge of a knife

She said she was ok
She said she was fine
But slowly but surely
Her mind began to unwind

So to not worry her friends
Those who were close
She would hide her madness
From those she cherished most

In isolation, she stayed
To fight her corruption
Like a Volcano, she felt close
To a deadly eruption

And as the clock wound down
She was left to thoughts
Intrusively dark worms
That tied her brain in knots

Without anyone around
She remembered the pain
Of Arthur's abandonment
And the tears that rained

She thought of the life
That she was robbed
Forced to do battle
Against foes that mobbed

She remembered the gruel
And it's disgusting taste
Slimy and cold
It was edible waste

She remembered her magic
The basic springs and gears

And how others mocked her
With points and jeers

She remembered her body
And how she was still six
Despite being an adult
With no way to fix

She remembered it all
The resentment and rage
And knew it was wrong
Despite living in a cage

She needed to hold out
Just a little longer
She wasn't weak
She was stronger

"I want to believe in the light."
"At the end of this tunnel."
"So I'll believe that Graduation is good."
"While my mind is functional."

"It's important to stay positive."
"To look on the bright side."
"To keep your head low."
"And swallow your pride."

She repeated her mentor's words
Clung on like a leech
She wanted to do her proud
With the lessons she was taught.

The door to her room knocked
And in walked a guard
His body wide
And his expression stone hard

It was time
That much was certain
Her career was over
And it was time for the curtain

She got up ready

For a new dawn
The guard did beckon
To the Great Beyond

She quietly followed
As she was sent away
Solemnly she walked
On the promised day

She saw her friend Marchen
Along the way
And noticed she had bright pink eyes
Just as she played

It would soon be her turn
Just after Alice
Maybe they'd meet again
Just by the palace

But alas, now,
Was just not the time
So she'll continue to walk
Among the grime

"I want to believe in the light."
"At the end of this tunnel."
"So I'll believe that Graduation is good."
"While my mind is functional."

"It's important to stay positive."
"To look on the bright side."
"To keep your head low."
"And swallow your pride."

Her head was covered
By a burlap sack
As she was carted away
And her vision blacked

This went on
For just a few hours
Unaware of her surroundings
Except the smell of flowers

But then finally
The cart suddenly stopped
And she was picked off the cart
Before she was dropped

She was led into a room
A rather large chamber
At least that was her assumption
From the echoes that clambered

They finally stopped
And she was put on her knees
Removing the bag
Her gaze did freeze

"I want to believe in the light."
"At the end of this tunnel."
"So I'll believe that Graduation is good."
"While my mind is functional."

"It's important to stay positive."
"To look on the bright side."
"To keep your head low."
"And swallow your pride."

These very words
Echoed in her head
As the sight before her,
Filled her with dread

For there were two guards
Spears pointed and sharp
They aimed true
To pierce her heart.

Out of reflex, she dodged
Just by a hair
Despite her bound hands
She ran toward the stairs

"You careless fools!"
"What were you thinking!?"
"Have you forgotten to bind her?"
"Or have you been drinking?"

She heard scolding
But couldn't really care
All she wanted right now
Was to get out of here

But just as metal boots
Marched on toward her
She quickly hid
Among the disorder

In a room so dark
With little to no light
It increased her paranoia
And filled her with fright.

But when her eyes adjusted
The horror grew worse
And it felt like her crystal heart
Was about to burst

For right in front of her
Was her very mentor
Stiff like a statue
And a face so tortured.

"What is this?"
Alice pondered aloud
As the room lit up
And unveiled the shroud.

All around her
Was various mages
Stuffed like Dolls
And put in cages.

"Oh dear oh my."
An Executioner walked in.
Despite his masked face.
She could see a grin.

"It seems a certain girl."
"Has done something Naughty."
"Seeing something they shouldn't"

"Now that's certainly haughty."

"What did you do?"

Alice looked on.

"Why are they like this?"

"What have you done?"

"Oh, you mean this?"

"It's just a little hobby."

"I decorate the corpses."

"It's not too shabby."

"B-But why?"

Alice spoke in murmurs.

Seeing fellow girls

Made objects from Murder.

"Well, I suppose the decorations."

"Are all on me."

"But their deaths were meaningful."

"Can't you see?"

"WHAT MEANING IS THERE!?"

"WHY SHOULD THEY DIE!?"

"WE FOUGHT FOR YOU ALL!"

"SO I MUST ASK... WHY!?"

"No need to yell."

"But if you must know."

"We simply must stop you."

"Before your madness grows."

"For there is no cure."

"To the plague of Witches."

"Better to put them down."

"And stuff their bodies with stitches."

"So you kill your mages"

"Once they outlived their use?"

"Promising escape."

"Before tying their noose?"

"Yes, Obviously."

The Man replied with glee.

"But personally, I end them."
"When they're on their knees."

"Their faces filled with betrayal."
"Contorted with despair."
"They make the best dolls."
"As they add a macabre flair!"

"But don't mistake"
"My preferences as motive." .
"Your madness is dangerous."
"And our king is assertive."

"If your madness continues."
"You'll turn into a threat."
"So think of this as putting down."
"A little sick pet."

"... I see."
Alice looked down in sorrow.
This looked like the end.
She wouldn't see tomorrow.

She couldn't use magic.
Not with those chains.
And it was unlikely she could run
Not with the pains

"I want to believe in the light."
"At the end of this tunnel."
"So I'll believe that Graduation is good."
"While my mind is functional."

"It's important to stay positive."
"To look on the bright side."
"To keep your head low."
"And swallow your pride."

These words echoed
Right there, once more
As Alice looked over
At her dead mentor

And the executioner walked up

Axed raised high
Alice accepted it
Ready to die.

...

...

.... Yeah.

FUCK.

THAT.

And in the spur of the moment.
Alice did push.
Knocking the man over.
Down on his tush.

"I wanted to be positive."
"To look on the bright side."
"Bet I can't keep my head low."
"Or swallow my pride."

"You people are monsters."
"This kingdom corrupt."
"A system where little girls fight?"
"That's just fucked up!"

"I can't stand it anymore!"
"Not when this is allowed!"
"If this is what I tried to protect."
"I can't be proud!"

"Well, tough shit."
The Execution rose.
"It's the king's decree."
"That's what he chose!"

"Then I say fuck you!"
"I don't want it! I don't want it!"
"I hate it! I loathe it!"
"It's absolute dogshit!"

“Stop acting like a brat!”
The Man spoke in anger.
Reaching for his axe.
The metal did clangor.

“Just die like the rest!”
“Right here and now!”
“Your performance is over!”
“Now take a bow!”

“NO!”
Alice defiantly refused
“I’m not taking this anymore!”
“I’m not being used!”

And then suddenly right there,
Something strange did happen
Alice could feel magic
Despite the cuffs sapping.

“What?” The Executioner.
Looked on in confusion.
Was this a trick?
Or some illusion.

“No, don’t tell me...”
“Did she overload the cuffs?”
“No, that’s not possible.”
“It must be a bluff!”

But this was no bluff!
This was reality.
And this was the start
Of a real tragedy.

Instinctively, Alice
Conjured some gears.
They surrounded the man
And filled him with fear

And then the gears turned,
Much like a clock
And then out of nowhere,
His skin turned to chalk.

His body wrinkled up
His teeth decayed
His eyes going white
As his hair did fray

And just like that
The man was no more
An old, dead husk
Down on the floor.

Alice wasn't sure why
But she understood her new power
As she flashed a sharp grin
And turned back the hour.

With time on her side
The facility was destroyed
By a newborn witch
That hid in the void

Year 20

A year had passed
Since Alice left
At least that's what her friends thought
For the info was deaf

There wasn't much on base
That they could do
Now it was Marchen's turn
That much they knew

But before the Rabbit
Could leave the gates
To join Alice on the other side
And graduate.

The fortress was raided
By Alice herself
"HELLO EVERYONE!"
"I'M HERE TO HELP!"

The girls were shocked

As the guards attacked.
But they were effortlessly cut down
Chopped up and hacked.

The scene was disgusting
But Alice just smiled
As she wiped away blood
The smell so vile.

More guards came
But they were dealt with right away
As gears shredded their bodies
As blood did spray

Another came in
To strike from behind
But Alice dodged easily
Her experience refined

And with one touch
The Man suddenly aged
He was twenty now eighty
As his life disengaged.

Upon that sight
Everyone froze
What did she do?
Nobody Knows!

"Everyone, I'm Here!"
"To reveal the truth!"
"That this kingdom is evil!"
"And that you wasted your youth!"

The guards tried to deny this.
To say this was lies.
But to that, Alice stabbed them.
Right in the eyes.

"Let me explain!" Alice continued.
Her voice was quite solemn.
With a snap of her fingers.
She conjured a gear golem.

The beast wound up
And projected a picture
Of what she saw beyond the walls
Along with a scripture.

She showed them all
The bodies of Girls
Turned into dolls
With decorations and twirls.

"We are not soldiers! But weapons!"
"Used by the king!"
"Tormented and sacrificed!"
"Led along by a string!"

"For when you graduate!"
"They just kill you right there!"
"You meet your demise."
"Filled with Despair!"

Marchen covered her mouth
Face filled with Shock
As Chesha and Trumpetta
Could only gawk

"These are illusions!"
"She's obviously mad!"
"She was supposed to graduate!"
"But flee she had!"

More guards came in,
To defuse her speech
But no matter what
They could not reach.

It was almost as if,
They were trapped in a moment
Stuck in place
As a form of torment.

With another Snap,
Alice brought more things
More evidence of the corruption
That she could fling.

"This was my mentor!"
"Now dead and stuffed!"
"Treated like a trophy!"
"As if murder was enough!"

"To all my friends."
"And fellow mages."
"Can't you see?"
"This is all outrageous!"

"We were used as pawns!"
"To fight pointless wars!"
"To stroke their egos!"
"To fill their pockets and more!"

"So I'm here now!"
"To set you all free!"
"To strike the Adults!"
"Will you join me?"

The girls were silent.
As Alice stretched her hand.
Until one little girl
Walked up to the stand.

"Alice..." Marchen spoke.
She was nervous and fidgety.
"Are you a Witch?"
She needed validity.

Alice was quiet
Rubbing her chin.
"Huh, I guess I am!"
Then randomly she spinned!

"But don't worry, Marchen!"
"It's not too bad!"
"So raise your head high!"
"No need to be sad!"

"But you're a monster now!"
Marchen objected.
"You don't look right!"

"You're clearly affected!"

"So I lost a few screws!"

"No big deal! So what!?"

"I feel better than ever!"

"It's all in the gut!"

"But!" Marchen objected.

Clearly dismayed.

She wasn't sure.

If she wanted things this way.

"Marchen." Then Alice.

Grabbed her hand.

"No need to be scared!"

"Just join the band!"

"Of course, if you refuse!"

"I might accidentally kill ya!"

"Sorry, but I'm unstable!"

"Like a rabid gorilla!"

A flash of fear grew

Upon her face

Seeing Alice so different

Her heart did race

But seeing the evidence

What could she do?

And it wasn't like Alice would lie

That much she knew.

"You must be lonely."

"You're clearly in pain."

"But as your friend."

"I'll share your bane!"

"That's the spirit!"

Alice spoke with glee.

"Now, is there anyone else?"

"That can join me?"

The girls were silent

Until Chesha and Trumpetta

Walked up to Alice
And made things better.

Then slowly but surely,
The girls kneeled down to Alice.
As the Witch ordered them all
To bring out their malice.

Suddenly, the girls
Could feel their magic
The cuffs now useless
And the guards grew frantic

Unable to move,
Thanks to Alice's spell
They could only beg for mercy
Before going to hell

Year 25

Five years passed
Since Alice rebelled
And now King Uther
Was properly felled

Arthur looked on
At his father's head
As it lay on the floor
Good as dead.

Then looked at Alice
Who was standing nearby
Seeing her here
He could only ask: "Why?"

"Why?" Alice echoed.
"Because he was a twit!"
"A Cruel Merciless Tyrant!"
"And a piece of shit!"

"But even so!"
"You slaughtered many more!"
"Innocent bystanders!"
"To even the score!?"

"Well...Hmmm..."
Alice rubbed her chin.
Before shrugging so casually
And flashing a grin.

"Sorry, Arthur, dear friend."
"But I can't help it!"
"As a bona fide witch"
"It's a force of habit!"

"And besides, dear Arthur."
"They're all responsible."
"Any and all humans."
"Are all just horrible!"

"I mean, you should know."
"What those men did!"
"The torture and torment!"
"And the lives they ended!"

"I was unaware..."
"But not for long..."
"When I saw the truth."
"I knew it was wrong."

"Yet, you did nothing."
"Stood by and watched."
"As King Uther continued."
"As his rule was botched."

"That much I knew."
"But as a prince, I'm weak."
"My words fell on deaf ears."
"And my voice was meek."

"I wanted to talk."
"To help you see reason."
"But my father dissuaded me."
"For it could be treason."

"You say all this."
"Yet I don't see proof."
"All I see is empty words."

"Echoed on the roof."

"I'm speaking the truth!"

"You know I don't lie!"

"You should know!"

"I'm not that guy!"

"Yet you lied about our promise."

"Of being together till the end!"

"That ring of flowers!"

"From a childhood friend!"

Arthur was silent.

As he looked away.

His expression was solemn.

And full of dismay.

"I know... I did."

"I made a foolish vow."

"I didn't realize it hurt you as much."

"But I know that now!"

"You think that's better!?"

"You toyed with my heart!"

"I wanted you to save me!"

"Right from the start!"

"But what did you do?"

"You walked away!"

"Left me to rot!"

"As I was sent to the fray!"

"What's more! You return!"

"And say you moved on!"

"Found another bride!"

"And made a spawn!"

"Leave Mordred out of this!"

"He's just a child!"

"He may be arrogant, yes!"

"But he just feels entitled!"

"Yeah, Yeah, Blah, Blah!"

"I was a kid too."

"That cried in agony!"
"And went boohoo!"

"And I'm still a child!"
"Forever Young!"
"Yet that means nothing more."
"Than a pile of cow dung."

"But look at me now."
"Dripping with power!"
"I'm so strong now!"
"That the King would Cower!"

"He begged for mercy!"
"Right here on my feet!"
"Something well deserved."
"Isn't that neat?"

"I understand, my father."
"He was no good man."
"But just because he deserves it."
"Doesn't mean that you can!"

"And what?" Alice asked.
"Should I have groveled and begged?"
"Should I have asked nicely?"
"To take it down a peg?"

"Violence begets Violence!"
"You see the results!"
"Your actions have caused wars."
"Against children and adults!"

"Because you rebelled."
"A line was crossed!"
"My father grew paranoid!"
"And he wanted all of you lost!"

"He set up hunts."
"For women of all ages!"
"To cut off your forces."
"And kill all the mages!"

"I've seen it myself!"

"Children burned at the stake!"
"As the kingdom I loved went hysteric!"
"My heart could only break!"

"They started it first!"
"Using us for battle!"
"We were just little kids!"
"Yet we were treated like cattle!"

"You say you cried tears!"
"For the lives that were lost!"
"Yet, guess what? I feel nothing!"
"My heart cold as frost!"

"My hate for adults, for humans."
"Outweighs my pain."
"And I won't rest"
"Until all are slain."

"And once you're all gone."
"I'll make my ideal world."
"A Wonderland for witches!"
"That will finally unfurl!"

Arthur could only look on
At his old friend in horror
And he realized right then
He couldn't restore her.

She was too far gone
Caught in delusions
Unable to forgive
That's her conclusion.

Alice then turned,
With a solemn face
And suddenly her grotesque look
Had a hint of grace.

"Though to be fair."
"I'll give you an offer."
"A wonderful gift!"
"Better than any coffer!"

"Take my hand!"
"And swear loyalty to me!"
"We can still be friends!"
"Can't you see?"

"With my power of time!"
"We can be together once more."
"You will be young just like me!"
"Free from war!"

"It would be just like old times!"
"Playing in the flowers with mice!"
"Laughing and singing!"
"Isn't that nice?"

Arthur was silent.
And to his own accord
He walked up to Alice
And raised up his sword.

"I'm sorry, Alice."
"But I refuse."
"I need to protect my people."
"So you must lose."

Alice smiled,
Solemnly so
"I knew you would say that."
"So I'll just go."

"What, you're leaving!?"
"Just like that!?"
"What about your goal?"
"What's up with that!?"

"My goal is clear."
"That much is certain."
"But it's not yet time."
"For the final curtain."

"So I'll head out."
"On my merry little way."
"As I build up my forces."
"For that promised day."

"But, my Dear Arthur."

"There's something you should know."

"I have a small little gift."

"Before I go."

And right then and there

She kissed him on the cheek

The prince was stunned

Unable to speak.

"Goodbye, Arthur."

"My dearest friend."

"Until we meet again."

"This will not be your end."