

DAME

(Alice asks for help from the Audience and finds out that Rabbit has taken her watch. Alice crouches down and puts her head into the entrance of the rabbit hole. She shouts for the Rabbit to come out. Enter Dame carrying a large handbag. She doesn't notice Alice.)

Dame: Oh hi everybody. I'm the cook at Miss Hatchet's Home for Lost and Unwanted Girls. You can call me Cookie. Everyone else does. Can you all say "Hello Cookie"? **(Audience response. Repeat if desired.)** I know it's late but I couldn't sleep. I had to come out for a walk. My poor tummy's been rumbling all night. **(Rubbing her tummy)** Oh, I do get awful problems with my poor tummy. I went into *[pharmacy name]* the other day and I said to the girl behind the counter. "Come here", I said, "Do you have anything for wind?" And she gave me this. **(Produces a small kite from her handbag.)** Oh, come here till I tell you a secret. I had an awfully tough day today with this *German shepherd*. I caught him "doing his business" on the lawn in front of the house. So I shouted at him. I said, "Get off the lawn... and take your sheep back to Munich with you". **(Seeing Alice)** Alice! What in heaven's name are you doing in the forest at this hour of the night?

Alice: I'm trying to catch a rabbit.

Dame: Well that's not how you catch a rabbit.

Alice: Oh I suppose you're the expert in rabbit catching around here. So how *do* you catch a rabbit then?

Dame: Well you sit by the rabbit hole... very still... and then make a noise like a carrot.

Alice: Don't be silly Cookie. Anyway, this is no ordinary rabbit. It's a unique rabbit.

Dame: Ah! Well, why didn't you say so? You know how to catch a unique rabbit, don't you?

Alice: No.

Dame: You "neek" up behind him.

Alice: Stop it.

Dame: Is he tame?

Alice: What difference does that make? How do you catch a *tame* rabbit?

Dame: The tame way you catch a unique rabbit.

Alice: I'm going after him.

(Dame prevents Alice from following the Rabbit down the hole.)

Dame: Alice, rabbits don't go around stealing from people. That's what we have a government for.

Anyway, you can't just go chasing down holes after rabbits. It's unhygienic.

Alice: My parents left me that watch. It's all I have left...

Dame: I know deary, but you just have to let things go sometimes. Sit down there and I'll cheer you up.

(Dame searches her bag for something to cheer Alice up. Ad libs as she pulls out odds and ends and then some pre-inflated modelling balloons. Dame twists the balloons into some shapes, it doesn't matter if they are good or not, and gives one to Alice. Dame makes some more models for some Audience members and ad libs. While Dame's back is turned, Alice exits through the rabbit hole. Dame eventually notices that Alice is missing.)

Dame: Where did she go? **(Audience interaction)** Down the rabbit hole? Oh why did she have to go and do that?

(Dame crouches down and puts her head in the entrance to the hole and calls for Alice. Enter Brandy, Sherry and Stella and other Orphans from Ms Hackett's Home for Lost and Unwanted Girls. Sherry has a sandwich that's supposed to be for Alice but she sneaks some bites as they enter. They notice Dame crouched over by the entrance to the rabbit hole.)

Stella: } **(Together)**

Brandy: } Cookie?

Dame: Oh hello girls. What are you lot doing out of 'The Home'? Does Ms Hatchet know you're here?