

Ms HACKETT

Hackett: I didn't send you lot up here to sing and prance about the place. I sent you to look for that Alice. Have you found her?

Orphans: Not yet Miss Hackett.

Hackett: Well, stop all this tomfoolery and start looking. She has to be around here somewhere.

(Enter Alice reading a book and carrying two more.)

Hackett: Well I'll be. So there you are Alice.

Alice: Where else would I be?

Hackett: Don't get cheeky with me Miss. Where have you been? We've been looking for you all day.

Stella: Well technically we were doing all the looking. You were sitting at home on your big fat a...

(Hackett throws a scary look at Orphans and they are silent.)

Hackett: Well? Answer me Miss. Where have you been?

Alice: I've been... on a journey.

(Orphans babble amongst themselves, amazed at Alice's exploits.)

Hackett: A journey? I never gave you permission. Where have you been?

Alice: I've been to the Bubblegum Forest.

Hackett: What?

Alice: Then down the Pixie Hollow. And then on the way back, I came through the Hundred Acre Woods.

(Orphans are amazed and babble and giggle.)

Hackett: (To Orphans) Quiet! (To Alice) What's all this nonsense talk? Are you trying to make a fool out of me?

(Taking a book) What's this? I thought I forbade you girls from reading. Filling your head with fairy-tale notions.

Alice: They're not all fairy-tales. Look at this one. It's all about joining sheet metal.

Hackett: Is it any good?

Alice: Riveting!

(Orphans laugh. Hackett throws a look of disdain at them again. They stop.)

Hackett: (Dismissive) Humph. Have you any idea what time it is?

(Alice takes out a pocket watch. When she opens it, it plays a tune. Hackett looks intently at the watch.)

Alice: Oh it's late. I lost all track of time.

(Alice puts the watch in her pocket.)

Hackett: Come on then. Everyone, back to the orphanage.

(Alice and all Orphans make to exit. Hackett stops Alice.)

Hackett: Everyone, that is, but you, my dear. For your insolence young Miss, you'll stay here, in the forest... all night.

(Orphans are astonished by the severity of the punishment.)

Hackett: And there'll be no supper for you either. See if an empty belly will change your attitude. (Giving Alice back her book) Here! See what nourishment you can get from these... I'll come fetch you in the morning.

(Aside) If you survive a night

(Hackett drives the girls off shouting abuse at them. Hackett looks back knowingly. Exit all except Alice.)