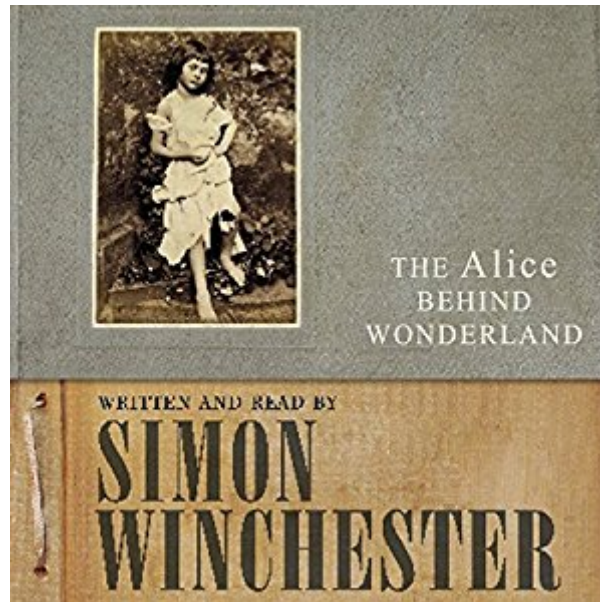




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Alice Behind Wonderland



Synopsis

On a summer's day in 1858, in a garden behind Christ Church College in Oxford, Charles Dodgson, a lecturer in mathematics, photographed six-year-old Alice Liddell, the daughter of the college dean, with a Thomas Ottewill Registered Double Folding camera, recently purchased in London. Simon Winchester deftly uses the resulting image - as unsettling as it is famous, and the subject of bottomless speculation - as the vehicle for a brief excursion behind the lens, a focal point on the origins of a classic work of English literature. Dodgson's love of photography framed his view of the world, and was partly responsible for transforming a shy and half-deaf mathematician into one of the world's best-loved observers of childhood. Little wonder that there is more to "Alice Liddell as the Beggar Maid" than meets the eye. Using Dodgson's published writings, private diaries, and of course his photographic portraits, Winchester gently exposes the development of Lewis Carroll and the making of his Alice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an unusually short work from Winchester, but the writing is just as good. Especially appropriate for fans of Lewis Carroll and Simon Winchester who want to know more about Charles Dodgson's fascination with young girls.

I always thought that "Alice in Wonderland" was written under the influence of cocaine, but this book tells a much better story of a brilliant mathematician, photographer, and writer whose creativity was

definitely "out of the box". Although the language in this book requires a dictionary, it was fun reading something this well written and researched. Alice Liddell was captivating for Dodgson (AKA Lewis Carroll), but the true story is not the "happily ever after" I expected. Victorian Age sensibilities are the setting for a love story that borders on tragic when everyone follows the rules of etiquette and tradition, and yet out of comes one of the most incredible piece of story-telling ever written. Well worth the read--it's only missing the photos of Alice.

A medley of facts and recollections, thinnish gruel from history faint and forgotten, reminds that all life and immediacy fades away.

I expected a little more at the climax of the book, when Dodgson is asked by Alice to write down the fanciful story he had spun for her casually on a day outing, but it was interesting to see how he wove in some of the history of early photography, which produced the picture around which the book is centered.

This is a short account of a chance meeting of Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and Alice Liddell, the daughter of his friend and mentor, and how a photo he took of her led to his writing "Alice in Wonderland". It is a captivating story told by one of my favorite authors whose style is to my liking. It is a short book and one that reads quickly. My main criticism is that the incident does not justify a book. A magazine story, yes, even a newspaper feature story, but not a book.

A telling expiation of the relationship between Carroll and Alice. Very interesting information is given on the history and development of photography. A worthy read!

The 19th century obsessions were strange indeed viewed with the lens afforded us today. Simon Winchester is an amazing writer...

Fantastic!!!!!! A must read. I have read everything that Winchester has written and every one is as good as a book can get. Joan Draper

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