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## Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll

And what's the "gyre" and to  
"gimble"?  
'To "gyre" is to go round and  
round like a gyroscope. To  
"gimble" is to make holes like a  
gimlet.  
'And "the wabe" is the grass-  
plot round a sun-dial, I  
suppose?' said Alice, surprised at  
her own ingenuity.  
'Of course it is. It's called  
"wabe," you know, because it  
goes a long way before it, and a  
long way behind it —  
'And a long way beyond it on  
each side,' Alice added.  
'Exactly so. Well, then,  
"mimsy" is "flimsy" and  
"miserable" (there's another  
portmanteau for you). And a  
"borogove" is a thin shabby-

'Why, it's a Looking-glass book,  
of course! And if I hold it up to a  
glass, the words will all go the  
right way again.'

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

'Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that  
catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!'

He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he  
sought —  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey  
wood,  
And burred as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through  
and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-  
snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head

'That'll do very well,' said  
Alice: and "slithy" means "lithe and  
slimy." "Lithe" is the same as  
"active." You see it's like a  
portmanteau — there are two  
meanings packed up into one  
word.  
'Let's hear it,' said Humpty  
Dumpty. 'I can explain all the  
poems that were ever invented —  
and a good many that haven't  
been invented just yet.'  
(Alice recites "Jabberwocky".)  
'That's enough to begin with,  
Humpty Dumpty interrupted:  
there are plenty of hard words  
there. "brillig" means four  
o'clock in the afternoon — the  
time when you begin broiling  
things for dinner.  
live on cheese.'  
Dumpty: 'also they make their  
nests under sun-dials — also they  
live on cheese.'

He went galumphing back.

'And has thou slain the  
Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!'  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

'It seems very pretty,' she said  
when she had finished it, 'but it's  
rather hard to understand!' (You  
see she didn't like to confess,  
ever to herself, that she couldn't  
make it out at all.) 'Somehow it  
seems to fill my head with ideas  
— only I don't exactly know what  
they are! However, somebody

...  
'You seem very clever at  
explaining words, Sir,' said Alice.  
'Would you kindly tell me the  
meaning of the poem called  
"Jabberwocky"?'  
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looking bird with its feathers  
sticking out all round —  
something like a live mop.'  
'And then "mome raths"?' said  
Alice. 'I'm afraid I'm giving you a  
great deal of trouble.'  
'Well, a "rath" is a sort of green  
pig: but "mome" I'm not certain  
about. I think it's short for "from  
home" — meaning that they'd lost  
their way, you know.'  
'And what does "outgrabe"  
mean?'  
'Well, "outgrabe" is  
something between bellowing  
and whistling, with a kind of  
sneeze in the middle: however,  
you'll hear it done, maybe —  
down in the wood yonder — and  
when you've once heard it you'll  
be quite content.'