
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Alice in Wonderland

Part 10: Alice's evidence



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Narrator

Hello. Alice has had lots of adventures in Wonderland. Now, she has been called as a witness in the trial of the Knave of Hearts. The King of Hearts is the judge, but Alice has grown so tall that her head reaches the top of the courthouse and all the people seem very far away.

Alice

How small you all are!

King

The witness must come to the witness box!

Narrator

Alice jumped up and knocked over the jury box. It was full of animals and they all fell out.

Animals

Ooh, ow, oh I'm terribly sorry! This is your chair, Ladies first! Oh dear, are you hurt? Etc...

Alice

I'm so sorry!

King

What do you know about this business?

Alice

Nothing at all!

Narrator

The King looked in his Book of **Rules**.

King

Rule forty-two. "All **persons** more than a mile high must leave the court."

Alice

I'm not a mile high!

King

Indeed you are not! You are nearly two miles high!

Alice

Well, I'm not going! And you **can't make** me!

Narrator

Alice had grown a little bit more, and the King, who was now the size of Alice's shoe, **could see** she was right about that part. His face went very **pale** and he closed the Book of Rules.

King

White Rabbit. Ask the jury: what is their decision about this matter? Did the Knave steal the Queen's tarts?

Narrator

But there was more **evidence**. The White Rabbit gave a letter to the King, who opened it and turned to the Knave of Hearts.

King

Knave of Hearts, did you write this?

Knave of Hearts

I didn't write it! Look at the end of it: there is no name written there!

King

Then you are not an honest man! An honest man always signs his work! Read the letter!

Narrator

And the White Rabbit read the letter. No-one understood a single word of it.

King

That's the most important evidence we've heard today!

Alice

I don't believe there's any meaning in it!

King

If there's no meaning in it, then we don't need to try to find any! Jury, what is your decision?

Narrator

The Queen stamped her feet.

Queen

No, no, no! **Punishment** first, decision afterwards!

Alice

That's nonsense! The punishment comes last!

Queen

Be quiet!

Alice

I won't!

Queen

Off with her head!

Narrator

No-one moved. Alice realised she had grown to her full size.

Alice

Who cares about you? All of you!

Narrator

Alice looked down at the little people all around her. She suddenly realised...

Alice

You're nothing but a pack of cards!

Narrator

As soon as she said this, the animals, the birds, the King and Queen and everyone else turned into a pack of cards and they all flew up into the air and came flying down upon her. The cards fluttered and flew all around her head and shoulders and Alice gave a scream as she tried to beat them off with her hands...

Alice

Ohhhh!!

Narrator

And then another strange thing happened to Alice... She found herself back on the riverbank where our story began. She opened her eyes and saw her sister smiling at her.

Alice's sister

Wake up, Alice dear! What a long sleep you've had!

Narrator

Alice's sister gently brushed away some dead leaves that had fallen from the tree and onto her face.

Alice

Oh... I've had such a curious dream. There was a White Rabbit and ... I got bigger and smaller ... and I met a caterpillar and a Hatter ... and I played croquet and ... a cat that smiled and ... so many things.

Narrator

Alice told her sister all about the Wonderland in her dream and the adventures she had had there. Perhaps one day Alice will dream herself back to Wonderland. If she does, I'll be sure to tell you. Goodbye.

Vocabulary

rules (singular: rule)

a list of instructions about what you are allowed to do and not allowed to do

persons

a formal word for 'people'

pale

(here) when you are pale, your skin colour is lighter than is usual because you are frightened or ill

evidence

facts or things that prove something

sentence

the punishment that a judge in a court gives to a criminal