

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

CHAPTER 11:

WHO STOLE THE TARTS?

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar

The King and Queen of Hearts were seated on their throne with a big crowd around them, when Alice and the Gryphon got there.

There were all sorts of small birds and animals, as well as the whole pack of cards.

The Knave stood in front of them in chains, with a soldier on each side to guard him. Near the King was the White Rabbit, with a trumpet in one hand and a roll of paper in the other. In the middle of the court was a table with a large dish of tarts on it.



They looked so good that it made Alice feel as if she would like to eat some of them.

"I wish they'd get the trial over," she thought, "and pass around those tarts!"

But there seemed no chance of this, so she looked a-round at the strange things a-bout her.



This was the first time Al-ice had been in a court of this kind, and she was quite pleased to find that she knew the names of most of the things she saw there.

"That's the judge," she thought, "I know him by his great wig."

The judge, was the King, and as he wore his crown on top of his wig, he looked quite strange.

"And that's the ju-ry box," thought Al-ice, "and those twelve things" (she had to say "things," you see, for some of them were an-i-mals and some were birds), "I guess, are the ju-rors."

She said the ju-rors word two or three times as she was proud that she knew it. She was right when she thought that not man-y girls of her age would have known what it all meant.

The twelve ju-rors all wrote on stone slates.

"What can they have to write down?" Al-ice asked the Gry-phon, in a low voice. "The tri-al has not be-gun yet."

"They're put-ting down their names," the Gry-phon said, "in case they for-get them."

"Stu-pid things!" Al-ice said in a loud voice, but then stopped, for the White Rab-bit cried out, "Si-lence in court!" and the King looked a-round to find out who had spok-en.

Al-ice could see that the ju-rors all wrote down "stu-pid things!" on their slates.

"A nice mess their slates will be in by the time the tri-al ends," thought Al-ice.

One of the ju-rors had a pen-cil that squeaked as he wrote. This, of course, Al-ice could... not... stand, so she went next to him, and when she had the chance, took it from him. She did this in such a way that the poor ju-ror (it was Bill, the Liz-ard) could not find it, so he wrote with one fin-ger for the rest of the day. Of course, this was no use, as it left no mark on the slate.

"Read the charge!" said the King.

The White Rab-bit blew three blasts on the trum-pet, and then from the pa-per in his hand read:

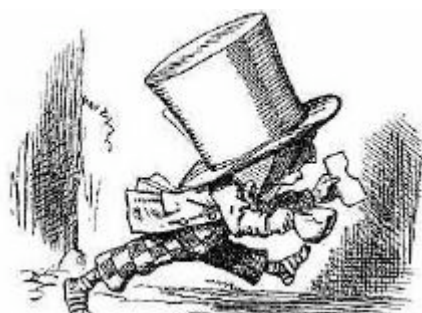
"The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts,
All on a sum-mer day:
The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts,
And took them all a-way!"

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"The ju-ry will now take the case," said the King.

"Not yet, not yet!" the Rab-bit said in haste. "There is a great deal more to come first."

"Call the first wit-ness," said the King, and the White Rab-bit blew three blasts on the trum-pet, and called out, "First wit-ness."



The first to come was the Hat-ter. He came in with a tea cup in one hand and a piece of bread and but-ter in the oth-er.

"I beg your par-don, your ma-jes-ty," he said, "but I had to bring these in, as I was not quite done with my tea when I was sent for."

"You should have been done," said the King. "When did you be-gin?"

The Hat-ter looked at the March Hare, who had just come in-to court, arm in arm with the Dor-mouse. "Fourth of March, I think it was," he said.

"Fifth," said the March Hare.

"Sixth," add-ed the Dor-mouse.

"Write that down," said the King to the ju-ry, and they wrote down all three dates on their slates, then added them up and changed the sum to shil-lings and pence.

"Take off your hat," the King said to the Hat-ter.

"It isn't mine," said the Hat-ter.

"You stole it!" cried the King, as he turned to the ju-ry, who wrote it down.

"I keep them to sell," the Hat-ter added. "I've none of my own. I'm a hat-ter."

The Queen put on her eye-glass-es and stared hard at the Hat-ter, who turned pale with fright.

"Tell us what you know of this case," said the King; "and don't be nerv-ous, or I'll have your head off on the spot."

This did-n't seem to calm him at all. He shift-ed from one foot to the other and looked at the Queen. In his fright he bit a large piece out of his tea-cup in-stead of the bread and but-ter.

Just then Al-ice felt a strange thrill, and did not know why' un-til she saw she had be-gun to grow a-gain.

"I wish you wouldn't push," said the Dor-mouse. "I haven't got room to breathe."

"I can't help it," said Alice; "I'm growing."

"You've no right to grow here," said the Dormouse.

"Don't talk such non-sense," said Alice. "You grow too."

"Yes, but not so fast as to squeeze the breath out of those who sit by me." He got up and moved to the other side of the court.

At this time the Queen had stopped staring at the Hatter, and just as the Dormouse crossed the court, she said to one of the men,

"Bring me the list of those who sang in the last concert."

The poor Hatter shook so much, that both his shoes came off.

"Say what you know of this case," the King called out again, "or I'll have your head off, if you shake."

"I am a poor man, your majesty," the Hatter began in a weak voice, "and I had just begun my tea, no more than a week or so..., and what with the bread and butter so thin... and the twinkling of the tea..."

"The twinkling of what?" asked the King.

"It began with the tea," the Hatter said.

"Of course twinkling begins with a T!" said the King. "Do you take me for a dunce? Go on!"

"I am a poor man," the Hat-ter went on, "and most things twink-led af-ter that... but the March Hare said..."

"I didn't," said the March Hare in great haste.

"You did," said the Hat-ter.

"I de-ny it," said the March Hare.

"He de-nies it," said the King: "leave out that part."

"Well, I'm sure the Dor-mouse said..." the Hat-ter went on, look-ing at the Dor-mouse to see if he would de-ny it too, but he was fast a-sleep.

"Then I cut some more bread and..."

"But what did the Dor-mouse say?" asked one of the ju-ry.

"That I can't say," said the Hat-ter.

"You must say or I'll have your head off," said the King.

The poor Hat-ter dropped his cup and bread, and went down on one knee. "I am a poor man," he be-gan.

"You are a poor speak-er," said the King.

Now one of the guin-ea pigs cheered, and one of the men seized him, threw him in to a bag, which he tied up with strings, and then sat on it.

"If that's all you know, you may stand down," the King said.

"I am as low as I can get now," said the Hat-ter; "I'm on the floor as it is."

"Then you may sit down," the King said.

"I'd like to get through with my tea first," said the Hat-ter with a look at the Queen who was still read-ing the list in her hand.

"You may go," said the King, and the Hat-ter left the court in such a hur-ry that he did not e-ven put his shoes on.

"And just take his head off out-side," the Queen add-ed to one of the sol-diers, but the Hat-ter was out of sight be-fore the man could get to the door.

"Call the next wit-ness," said the King.

The next to come was the Duch-ess' cook. Al-ice guessed who it was by the way the peo-ple near the door be-gan to sneeze.

"Tell what you know of this case," said the King.

"Won't," said the cook.

The King looked at the White Rab-bit, who said in a low voice, "Your ma-jes-ty must make her tell."

"Well, if I must, I must," said the King with a sad look.

He fold-ed his arms and frowned at the cook till his eyes were al-most out of sight, then asked in a stern voice, "What are tarts made of?"

"Pep-per, most-ly," said the cook.

"Sug-ar," said a weak voice near her.

"Catch that Dor-mouse," the Queen shrieked out. "Off with his head! Turn him out of the court! Pinch him! Off with his head!"

The whole court ran here and there, find-ing the Dor-mouse, and by the time this was done, the cook had gone.

"That's all right," said the King, as he was glad to be rid of her.

"Call the next," and he add-ed in a low voice to the Queen, "Now, my dear, you must take the next wit-ness in hand; this makes my head ache!"

Al-ice watched the White Rab-bit as he looked down the list.

She thought to her-self, "I want to see what the next witness will be like, as they haven't found out much yet."

I-mag-ine, how she felt when the White Rab-bit read out, at the top of his shrill lit-tle voice, the name "Al-ice!"