

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

CHAPTER 12:

ALICE ON THE STAND

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar

"Here!" cried Alice, but she forgot how large she had grown and jumped up in such a hurry that the edge of her skirt caught on the jury box and tossed them all out on to the heads of the crowd below.

They all lay there sprawling about, which made her think of a bowl of goldfish which she had bumped the week before.

"Oh, I do beg your pardon!" she said, and picked them up and put them back in the jury box as fast as she could.



"The trial can not go on," said the King, "until all the men are back in place... All!" he said with great force and looked hard at Alice.

She looked at the jury box and saw that in her hurry she had put the lizard in head first.

The poor thing was wav-ing its tail in the air and could not move. She soon got it out and put it right; "not that it mat-ters much," she thought; "I think it would be as much use in the tri-al, one way up as the oth-er."

As soon as their slates and pen-cils had been hand-ed back to them, the ju-ry set to work to write a-bout their fall. The Liz-ard, who seem-ed too weak to write, just sat, and gazed up at the roof of the court.

"What do you know of this case?" the King asked Al-ice.

"Not one thing," said Al-ice.

"Not one thing, at all?" asked the King.

"Not one thing, at all," said Al-ice.

"Write that down," the King said to the ju-ry.

The King sat for some time and wrote in his note-book, then he called out, "Si-lence!" and read from his book, "Rule For-ty-two. Ev-er-y-one more than a mile high is to leave the court."

All looked at Al-ice.

"I'm not a mile high," said Al-ice.

"You are," said the King.

"Not far from two miles high," add-ed the Queen.

"Well, I will not go," said Al-ice, "I know that's a new rule you have just made up."

"It's the first rule in the book," said the King.

"Then it ought to be Rule One," said Al-ice.

The King turned pale and snapped shut his note-book.

"The ju-ry can now take the case," he said in a weak voice.

"There's more to come yet, please your ma-jes-ty," said the White Rab-bit, as he jumped up; "this pa-per has just been picked up."

"What's in it?" asked the Queen.

"I haven't read it yet," said the White Rab-bit, "but it seems to be a note from the Knave of Hearts to some one."

"Whose name is on it?" said one of the ju-rors.

"There's no name on it," said the White Rab-bit. He looked at it with more care as he spoke, and add-ed, "it isn't a note at all; it's a set of rhymes."

"Please your ma-jes-ty," said the Knave, "I didn't write it, and they can't prove that I did; as there is no name at the end."

"If you did not sign it," said the King, "that makes your case worse.

You must have meant some harm or you would have signed your name like an hon-est man."

All clapped their hands, as this was the first smart thing the King had said that day.

"That proves his guilt," said the Queen.

"It does not prove a thing," said Alice, "Why you don't e-ven know what the rhymes are."

"Read them," said the King.

"Where shall I be-gin, your ma-jes-ty?" the White Rab-bit asked.

"Why at the first verse, of course," the King said "and go on un-til you come to the end, then stop."



The White Rab-bit read:

"They told me you had been to her,
And spoke of me to him:
She gave me a good name, in-deed,
But said I could not swim.

"He sent them word that I had gone
(We know it to be true);
If she should push the mat-ter on
What would be-come of you?

"I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three, or more;
They all came back from him to you,
Though they were mine be-fore.

"My no-tion was, she liked him best,
(Be-fore she had this fit)
This must be kept from all the rest
But him and you and it."

"That's the best thing we've heard yet," said the King, rub-bing
his hands ve-ry pleased; "so now let the ju-ry..."

"If one of you can tell what it means," said Al-ice (she had
grown so large by now that she had no fear of the King)

"I will be glad to hear it. I don't think it makes a grain of
sense."

The ju-ry all wrote down on their slates, "She doesn't think it makes a grain of sense."

But no one tried to say what it meant.

"If there's no sense in it," said the King, "that saves a world of work, you know, as we don't need to try to find it.

And yet I don't know," he went on, as he spread out the rhymes on his knee, and looked at them with one eye: "I seem to find some sense in them... 'said I could not swim'... you can't swim, can you?" he added, turn-ing to the Knave.

The Knave shook his head with a sigh. "Do I look like it?" he said. (Which was plain, as he was made of card board.)

"All right, so far," said the King, and he went on: "'We know it to be true'... that's the ju-ry, of course... 'I gave her one, they gave him two'... that must be what he did with the tarts, you know..."

"But it goes on, 'they all came back from him to you,'" said Al-ice.

"Why, there they are," said the King, point-ing to the tarts.



"Isn't that as clear as can be? Then it goes on, 'before she had this fit'... you don't have fits, my dear?" he said to the Queen.

"No! no!" said the Queen in a great rage, throw-ing an ink-stand at the Liz-ard as she spoke.

"Then the words don't fit you," he said, as he looked a-round the court with a smile. But no one spoke. "It's a joke," he added in a fierce voice, and all the court laughed. "Let the ju-ry now bring in their verdict," the King said.

"No! no!" said the Queen. "Sen-tence first... then the ver-dict."

"Such rub-bish!" said Al-ice out loud. "Of course the ju-ry must make..."

"Hold your tongue!" screamed the Queen.

"I won't!" said Al-ice.

"Off with her head!" shout-ed the Queen at the top of her voice, but no one moved.

"Who cares a-bout you?" said Al-ice.
(She had grown to her full size by this time.)

"You are noth-ing but a pack of cards!"



At this the whole pack rose up in the air and flew down upon her. She gave a little scream and tried to beat them off... .. but then she found herself lying on the grass with her head in the lap of her sister, who was brushing away some dead leaves that had fallen down from the trees onto her face.

"Wake up, Alice dear," said her sister; "what a long sleep you have had!"

"Oh, I've had such a strange dream!" said Alice, and then she told her sister as well as she could all the strange things that you have just read about.

When she came to the end of it, her sister kissed her and said: "It was a strange dream, dear, I'm sure; but we must run now to have our tea... it's getting late."

So Alice got up and thinking while she ran, what a strange but wonderful dream it had been.

