
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Alice in Wonderland

Part 9: Who stole the tarts?

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Narrator

Hello. Alice is having lots adventures in Wonderland. Now, she's in a courtroom full of animals. Everybody is waiting for the trial to start. The Queen and the King of Hearts have already arrived and they are sitting on their **thrones**. The rest of the room was filled with birds and animals and the whole pack of playing-card people. Alice saw the White Rabbit. He was holding a **trumpet** in one hand and a large piece of paper in the other. The White Rabbit blew the trumpet.

White Rabbit

Silence in the court!

Narrator

The trial started. The King was the **judge** and twelve animals were the **jury**. The King spoke first.

King

Read the accusation!

White Rabbit

The Queen of Hearts, she made some **tarts**,
All on a summer day.
The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts
And took them quite away.

King

Knave of Hearts, what do you say?

Knave of Hearts

It wasn't me! I didn't do it!

King

Silence! Call the first **witness**!

White Rabbit

Bring in the first witness!

Narrator

The first witness was the Hatter. He looked very **nervous**. He came into the court with a cup of tea in one shaking hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other.

King

Give your evidence Hatter, and don't be nervous, or you'll lose your head!

Narrator

The King's words made the Hatter even more frightened. He was so confused and that he took a large bite out of his teacup instead of his bread and butter.

Hatter

I'm a poor man, your Majesty.

King

You're a very poor speaker.

White Rabbit

Poor Hatter. He didn't use to be mad, you know. He used to be quite normal.

Alice

And I used to be taller...

Narrator

Alice began to have a curious feeling. It was a feeling she remembered.

Alice

Ohh.. I'm growing again!

Narrator

No-one noticed that Alice was getting taller. They were all watching the Hatter, who was too frightened to speak.

King

You may go. Call the next witness!

Narrator

The next witness was the cook.

King

Cook, what are tarts made of?

Cook

Pepper, mostly.

Narrator

Everybody started sneezing. Nobody seemed to notice Alice growing taller and taller. By the time they stopped sneezing, the cook had disappeared.

King

Never mind! Call the next witness!

Narrator

Alice watched as the White Rabbit studied the piece of paper, looking for the name of the next witness. Imagine her surprise when he straightened up, took a deep breath and shouted the name of the next witness...

White Rabbit

Alice!

Narrator

Everybody in the courtroom turned to look at Alice. Alice felt herself grow a little taller, as she took a deep breath, and stepped forward. Next time, I'll tell you what happened when Alice gives her evidence and the White Rabbit reads a letter from the Knave of Hearts. Curiouser and curiouser... Goodbye.

Vocabulary

thrones (singular: throne)

the special chair a King or Queen sits on

trumpet

a musical instrument made of metal that you blow into

judge

the person who is in charge of a court of law

jury

a group of people in a court who decide if the person on trial is innocent or guilty

tarts (singular: tart)

a kind of pie made with pastry and fruit, jam, meat or vegetables

witness

a person who saw something and tells the court what they saw

nervous

frightened and anxious