

# The Wondrous New Adventures of Alice

By WARREN CLEMENTS

The three creatures on the tribunal were assembled behind their table when Alice arrived, flushed from running halfway across the campus.

"Sorry I'm late," she whispered to a gopher sleeping by the door. "Nobody told me this was going on. Where do I sit?"

"Who are you?" murmured the gopher.

"I'm representing the student body of York," said Alice.

"Then you can stand outside," breathed the gopher, falling into a deep slumber. "Close the door on your way out."

## UNDER GUARD

The Knave of Hearts, and leader of the United Left party, stood at the other side of the room, with a soldier on each side to guard him. In the very middle of the court sat a desk with a large dish of petitions, protests and leaflets, and a dog-eared copy of the CYSF constitution.

The White Rabbit blew three blasts on the trumpet, and unrolled his parchment scroll.

"The Knave of Hearts, too early starts,

To launch his slate's campaign..." "Guilty," sang the jackass on the tribunal, encouraging the dormouse and the canard next to him to do the same.

"Not yet, not yet," hissed the White Rabbit. "There's a great deal to come before that."

The Duchess gave a loud sneeze. "Off with his head," she crowed.

"My goodness," thought Alice to herself. "What a low voice the Duchess has. She sounds like Bill Eggertson of Radio York."

## FIRST CALL

"Call the first witness," ordered the CYSF president, who was taking the notes.

"Isn't the tribunal supposed to say that?" asked Alice. "I thought the note-taker wasn't supposed to speak."

"Not true," said the canard on the tribunal. "Anyone can speak in here if they want to."

"Then that means—" "Silence," said the tribunal.

The first witness to climb onto the stand was the White Rabbit, who spoke very quickly.

"Campaigning for the CYSF election was supposed to begin on February 24, but the election was switched from March 10 and 11 to March 12 and 13, so nominations closed February 28. Am I being clear?"

The Mad Hatter cheered from the visitors' gallery.

"Now, nobody said the campaigning dates had changed, so the United Left party campaigned on February 24. But according to the constitution, campaigning can't start until nominations close, which was February 28. Am I being clear?"

"Guilty," said the jackass.

"Not yet," snapped the dormouse.

"So the United Left campaigned too early," Alice whispered to the guinea-pig next to her. "But if nobody said the campaigning dates had changed, how could they have known it was too early?"

## PIG AND PEPPER

The guinea-pig crinkled up its nose and said in a knowing tone, "The constitution."

"What does the constitution say?" "Whatever we want it to, no doubt."

What a queer place, thought Alice. Everyone quotes the constitution, but nobody has read it.

"Call the second witness," shouted the note-taker.

The Duchess dropped her baby with a loud thump and hobbled to the stand. She sneezed violently.

"Why are you sneezing?" asked



Warren Clements (and John Tenniel) graphic

the canard on the tribunal.

"I'm allergic to the Knave of Hearts," said the Duchess.

"Off with his head," sneered the jackass.

"Who is that jackass?" Alice asked the guinea-pig.

"He's the chief returning officer," said the pig. "He's in charge of the election."

"He's certainly not a very impartial officer," said Alice, knitting her brow.

"He's impartial most of the time," said the pig. "He's just not very partial to the Knave of Hearts."

Alice thought for a moment. "But this can't be a very fair trial if everyone's already made up their mind."

"You have to make up your mind eventually," said the pig. "What difference does it make if you decide before or after the trial?"

## A VIAL ACTION

The Duchess sneezed violently and threw a vial of pepper at the Knave of Hearts. There was some commotion at the door, and everyone in the court turned around. The Mock Turtle was attempting to break through a line of playing cards assigned to guard the meeting.

"This is a closed trial," said one of the cards. "By invitation only. What right have you to enter?"

"I'm a Mock Turtle," said the intruder. "Isn't this a Mock Trial?"

The note-taker grew impatient. "Let's have the verdict now and be done with it."

The White Rabbit stamped his foot. "Not until we've heard the evidence. Duchess, what can you tell the court?"

"I lodged a protest against the Knave of Hearts for campaigning too early. If he was able to start campaigning February 24, we all should have been able to."

"When did you nominate yourself?" asked the Rabbit.

"February 28," said the Duchess.

"Why are you running?"

"To get rid of the Knave of Hearts."

"How did you know he was running?"

"I saw his campaign literature on February 24."

## A LONG TALE

Alice began to develop a slight headache, and ate one of the guinea-pigs. The White Rabbit asked the

Duchess to read out the constitution.

"The chief returning officer shall act in the interests of a fair election and in the best interests of the students," read the Duchess.

"Inadmissible," said the note-taker.

"The chief returning officer shall notify the community as a whole of the proper campaign dates," read the Duchess.

"Was that done?" Alice whispered to a toad sitting near her.

"Yes," said the toad. "In the Daily Bulletin. It said campaigning was to start February 24."

"Inadmissible," said the note-taker.

"Campaigning shall not begin until nominations close," read the Duchess.

"Admissible," said the note-taker.

"Guilty," said the jack-ass.

The tribunal reached a quick decision. "The Knave of Hearts has to stop campaigning for three days."

"You're an ass," snapped the Knave of Hearts.

"The Knave of Hearts is out of the election," said the tribunal.

"You mean I can't call the tribunal an ass?"

"No way."

"Can I call an ass a tribunal?"

"Of course."

"Thank you, tribunal."

## THE TOAD

Alice leaned over to the toad. "Was the Knave of Hearts the only one who campaigned too early?"

"No," said the toad. "The Gryphon saw the York party campaigning early."

"Why isn't the tribunal punishing them?"

"Nobody protested."

"But the chief returning officer is supposed to act on his own initiative, isn't he?" asked Alice.

"Come on," laughed the toad, rolling around in the aisles and clutching his stomach in hysterics. "Who in the history of York student politics has ever heard of initiative?"

## WHERE AM I?

The note-taker stood up in the front of the court and appeared confused.

"Did the tribunal just say the Knave couldn't run?"

"Yes," said the White Rabbit.

"Can I protest against his disqualification?"

"Why, no," said the White Rabbit, a bit surprised. "You've had two days to protest. It's too late now."

"Oh dear me," said the note-taker, and she laughed, and laughed, and laughed.

What a strange way for seemingly responsible people to behave, Alice thought to herself. I wonder how many people will bother to vote with all this confusion.

If, she added cautiously, there is anyone left to vote for.

## A SCUFFLE

As Alice started to leave the courtroom, she noticed a small scuffle going on in the anteroom. One of the guards was wrestling with a Scapegoat.

"What's going on?" she asked.

"This creature," panted the guard, "refuses to accept the tribunal's verdict."

"I'm innocent," gasped the Scapegoat, breaking from the guard's hold.

"Innocence is no excuse," snapped the guard. "You should be more careful who you pick as your friends."

Alice handed the Scapegoat a cloth to wipe the mud off his jacket.

"Why were you fighting?" she asked.

"The Knave of Hearts was campaigning with his band of United Left people, and they put my name on their campaigning leaflets," said the Scapegoat.

"They added your name to theirs?"

"No," said the goat. "They didn't sign their own names, because they didn't want to get disqualified. So they put on my name and I was disqualified."

"What was the campaign literature about?"

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yelled loudly. "Is this not a democracy?"

He turned to Alice. "Do you think they heard me?" he asked. "Ouch, the tape is slipping."

"Why are you doing this?" asked Alice.

"I'm a martyr to the injustice of society," said the Knave.

"But aren't martyrs supposed to die?"

"Die? Die, hell," said the Knave. "I can't die. I have to run for president again in a few months."

## LOOKING-GLASS

Alice tried to tape the Knave to the cross, but the Knave spotted a playing card whipping a horse on the other side of the field, and rushed over to go under the whip.

"He's whipping me, he's whipping me," shouted the Knave in anguish.

Alice turned around and found the Cheshire Cat smiling at her. He was sitting on a large looking-glass.

"What's through the looking glass?" asked Alice.

"The real world," said the Cheshire Cat. And he grinned broadly.

## FLYING INKWELLS

Alice returned to the courtroom and found all the creatures fighting each other and throwing inkwells through the air.

"Lift me up," cried one gopher excitedly. "I can't see."

"Why on earth would you want to?" asked Alice in surprise.

"This is politics the way it should be," squealed the gopher.

Alice noticed that somebody had taken advantage of the confusion to paste signs over the walls.

"But the signs are blank," she murmured.

"I didn't have much to say," a hedgehog piped up beside her. "I just wanted to join in the fun."

On the tribunal's stand, seven playing cards were stuffing a rival candidate into a teapot.

"Dear me," Alice wondered aloud. "Certainly this will do him an injury!"

"Don't interfere," sputtered the candidate. "I'm going for the sympathy vote."

If this is democracy in action, thought Alice as she left the hall, I certainly hope it isn't catching.