

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Lewis Carroll

Why is 'sentence first—verdict afterwards' funny and threatening at the same time?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes

Sentence first

FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Chapter XII · Alice's Evidence
START	No, no! said the Queen. Sentence first—verdict afterwards.
END	Nobody moved.
PASSAGE ID	sec-alice-04

THE MOVE

Expose injustice by reversing the expected order of a process

WHY THIS PASSAGE

A trial is supposed to move from evidence to verdict to sentence. The Queen’s command reverses that order, making the absurdity comic while also revealing how authority becomes dangerous when procedure no longer limits power.

MARK

Write the expected order EVIDENCE -> VERDICT -> SENTENCE. Underline the Queen’s reversed order. Circle the threat or power that makes the joke consequential rather than harmless.

NOTICE

- What protects an accused person when procedure happens in the proper order?

- What disappears when sentence comes before verdict?
- Why can the same reversal be funny as nonsense and frightening as a model of authority?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why is 'sentence first—verdict afterwards' funny and threatening at the same time? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why is 'sentence first—verdict afterwards' funny and threatening at the same time? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The reversal is funny because it violates obvious procedural logic, and threatening because the Queen has enough power to try enforcing the absurd order. Nonsense exposes arbitrary authority.
EVIDENCE	State the proper order of trial procedure, the Queen's reversed order, and the threat that follows Alice's objection.
WATCH FOR	Do not treat the joke as harmless wordplay. The danger comes from power operating without procedure.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

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START ANCHOR	No, no! said the Queen. Sentence first—verdict afterwards.
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END ANCHOR

Nobody moved.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Write the expected order EVIDENCE -> VERDICT -> SENTENCE. Underline the Queen's reversed order. Circle the threat or power that makes the joke consequential rather than harmless.
2. NOTICE - What protects an accused person when procedure happens in the proper order? What disappears when sentence comes before verdict? Why can the same reversal be funny as nonsense and frightening as a model of authority?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Why is 'sentence first—verdict afterwards' funny and threatening at the same time?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.