

ABAJOURNAL

[Home \(/\)](#) / [Your Voice \(/voice/\)](#) / Humpty Dumpty goes to court

YOUR VOICE

Humpty Dumpty goes to court

BY [MARCEL STRIGBERGER](https://www.abajournal.com/authors/64798/) ([HTTPS://WWW.ABAJOURNAL.COM/AUTHORS/64798/](https://www.abajournal.com/authors/64798/))

JUNE 17, 2026, 1:55 PM CDT



Marcel Strigberger.

Does anybody think Humpty Dumpty took his fall off the wall lying down? No way. Mr. Dumpty actually commenced a lawsuit seeking compensation as a result of injuries suffered. I recently came across a copy of a little-known decision of the High Court of Wonderland, which I would like to share.

High Court of Wonderland

Humpty Dumpty v. the King and all the King's Horses et. al.

Reasons for judgment

Justice Wiggle

This is an action for damages by one Humpty Dumpty. The main facts are as follows:

I. Facts

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,
All the king's horses and all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again.

The wall in question is situated on lands owned by the crown, namely His Majesty the King of Hearts. Mr. Dumpty testified that it was a hot day in July when he decided to stroll through the king's forest, being a shortcut en route home. He wanted to relax a bit and when he noticed the subject wall, he propped himself up thereon. The evidence was that the wall was 4 feet, 2 inches in height.

After about two minutes, the plaintiff lost his balance and came tumbling down onto the ground. A young lady, one Alice, witnessed the unfortunate event, and she summoned help. All the king's men and his horses were the first responders. They rendered first aid, but, alas, they could not put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Mr. Dumpty brings this action for damages against the king and all of his men and horses.

II. Issues

a) Liability of the crown

The plaintiff pleads that the defendant King was negligent in that the wall was of faulty design and an allurements, beckoning unsuspecting visitors to sit thereon.

His Majesty argues that the purpose of the wall was not to sit on it but rather for the kingdom to post royal-related announcements such as a ball, a royal appointment or a beheading.

Defense counsel Sir James Pilkington K.C. pleads that there is no liability in any event as the plaintiff was a trespasser. He tendered a sign (Exhibit C), reading, “No trespassing. His Majesty assumes no liability for injuries however caused or suffered.”

When asked in cross-examination what the plaintiff thought this warning meant, he replied, “Words mean what I choose them to mean—neither more nor less.”

This court accepts the plaintiff’s reasonable interpretation.

Defendant King clearly owed a duty of care to visitors to the area. He unfortunately breached his duty. The minimum His Majesty ought to have done is equip the subject wall with handles. There was a clear lack of due diligence.

b) Liability of the king’s horses and men

Mr. Dumpty alleges that the horses and men stood by helpless and ill-equipped and trained to deal with what would be a common occurrence. While he lay on the ground in pieces, he testified that he overheard the men and the horses conferring and the horses suggesting a simple and definitive course of action: shooting him. Fortunately, the will of the men prevailed over that of the horses.

As a result of the delay in proper assistance, he claims he has suffered irreparable harm.

This diagnosis was confirmed by a Dr. Pillsbury, who opined that when a gentleman built like an egg falls off a wall, time for treatment is of the essence. Proper medical attention must be provided with all haste. He notes, “You cannot just leave him lying in the sun.”

Nor does this court accept defense argument that the plaintiff’s unusual fragile composition exposed him to greater risk of injury. It is trite law that a tortfeasor takes his victim as he finds him. These defendants were remiss in their duty owed to this loyal subject in the case at bar.

III. Contributory negligence of the plaintiff

The defendants claim even if there is liability, the plaintiff was

contributorily negligent in that while sitting on the wall, he was eating an ice cream cone. This evidence was corroborated by Alice. The plaintiff denies this allegation completely, calling it pure fiction.

However, in able cross-examination by counsel Sir Henry Bellingham Esq., Alice admitted her judgment could have been compromised as she had recently eaten some strange mushrooms.

This court does not accept her evidence where it conflicts with the that of the plaintiff's.

IV. Damages

Turning to the issue of damages, the plaintiff is still in tatters. He has been under the care of a Dr. Nigel Winston, a plastic surgeon specializing in eggshell injuries. Dr. Winston notes that the plaintiff's prognosis is highly guarded. His enjoyment of life has been severely compromised.

Prior to this accident, he used to enjoy activities such as writing and reading poetry, going for walks and having daily tea at the home of the Mad Hatter. He finds these activities near impossible now as he is still somewhat dissected. He claims that the other guests at the Mad Hatter's tea party look at him strangely as he occupies three chairs. He is certain that the smile of the Cheshire Cat is directed at him.

V. Disposition

Taking all the evidence into account, this court awards judgment for the plaintiff, reimbursing him for all of his medical and other out-of-pocket expenses in the amount of 15,000 crowns, 11 shillings and three pence, and the further amount of 50,000 crowns for pain and suffering.

Judgment accordingly.

—*His Lordship, the Honorable Justice Wiggle*

Hopefully, this case may make a great precedent for lawyers arguing a similar accident.

Marcel Strigberger, after 40-plus years of practicing civil litigation in the

Toronto area, closed his law office and decided to continue his humor writing and speaking passions. His latest book is First, Let's Kill the Lawyer Jokes: An Attorney's Irreverent Serious Look at the Legal Universe (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DFHJGX1R?ref=cm_sw_r_cp_ud_dp_JNBV4X3RA8XVQ845YECR&ref_=cm_sw_r_cp_ud_dp_JNBV4X3RA8XVQ845YECR&social_share=cm_sw_r_cp_ud_dp_JNBV4X3RA8XVQ845YECR&starsLeft=1). Visit [MarcelHumour.com](https://www.marcelshumour.com), and follow him at [@MarcelHumour](https://twitter.com/MarcelHumour) on X, formerly known as Twitter.

ABAJournal.com is accepting queries for original, thoughtful, nonpromotional articles and commentary by unpaid contributors to run in the Your Voice section. Details and submission guidelines are posted at “Your Submissions, Your Voice (https://www.abajournal.com/voice/article/your_voice_submissions).”

This column reflects the opinions of the author and not necessarily the views of the ABA Journal—or the American Bar Association.

Write a letter to the editor, share a story tip or update, or report an error.

(/contact?referrer=<https://www.abajournal.com/voice/article/humpty-dumpty-goes-to-court>)

Copyright 2026 American Bar Association. All rights reserved.