

Three Little Pigs

A quiet buzz settled over the vast courtroom. The members of the jury were settled back into their seats after a long break, and the public galleries were a bustling hive of activity. On the stand, the accused was sworn in, and the prosecuting attorney took to her feet. She was wearing an expensive suit and wore a pained expression. She was also a fox. This wasn't too unusual; the accused was a pig, and the judge was a badger.

When the fox spoke, it was with a soft, friendly voice that didn't match her face. "To be clear, Mr Hamm, you have pleaded innocent to the murder of Mr Wulf?" The pig nodded but said nothing. "I am here today to prove to you that this pig is lying!" this was directed at the jurors. "First, can you describe your arrest?"

Mr Hamm coughed and said, "It was about six in the morning, I was just eating my breakfast. The officers barged into my house without so much as a by-your-leave and the next thing I know, I'm being dragged into the back of a cop car."

"Indeed. And why did they arrest you?"

"They said I killed Mr Wulf. I didn't though," Mr Hamm paused for a split second. "Well, I suppose I did kill him. But it was self-defence, I promise!"

At the pig's confession, the court erupted. Photographers snapped away, and journalists scribbled their notes. The judge banged his gavel and called for order. When everybody had been settled back down, he waved the fox to continue.

"So you admit to killing him? Maybe you had better tell us what led to such a violent attack," said the fox with a wry smile.

"He'd been trying to blow down my house. He'd stand there day and night, huffing and puffing. I feared for my life. He'd done it before as well. My two brothers both had their houses blown down by him. They had to come and live with me! Luckily, my house is made of bricks."

"You say that your brothers had their houses blown down, did you see it for yourself?"

"No," the pig said nervously. "They told me."

"Well, our doctors tell us that Mr Wulf suffered from chronic asthma. There's no way he could blow out a candle, let alone a house."

The pig tried to speak, but no words came out. The lawyer continued, "In fact, your brothers have both recently claimed substantial insurance pay-outs for their destroyed houses. We believe that Mr Wulf was simply suffering from an asthma attack and stumbled down your chimney, at which point you boiled him alive. What do you have to say for yourself?" the fox finished with a flourish.

Humbled, Mr Hamm looked at his trotters. A quiet hum rose again in the crowd as the judge ordered the jury out to make their decision. When they finally returned, a couple of hours later,



the foreman (a squirrel) stood and proceeded to speak. "Your honour, the members of the jury find Mr Hamm..."

VOCABULARY

1. What does the word "vast" mean in the first sentence?
2. Find three synonyms for "bustling".
3. Explain what a "wry smile" is.
4. Write the word "suffering" in the past tense.

VIPERS QUESTIONS

P

How do you think the jury found Mr Hamm? Explain.

I

When Mr Hamm confessed, how did the people of the court feel? Explain.

R

What condition did the wolf suffer from?

E

Explain what actually happened to the wolf on the night of the murder.