

Mad Hatter / March Hare

ACT I ALICE IN WONDERLAND

45

SCENE 8

THE MAD TEA PARTY

(† 17, 18, and 19. * 8)

ALICE turns, as LIGHTS come up, to find a ~~table~~
~~table~~ and the MARCH HARE and the MAD HATTER
having tea at it. The ~~DORMOUSE~~ is asleep between them.
It is a very large table, but the HARE, the HATTER, and
the DORMOUSE are crowded together at one corner of it,
with a large teapot in front of them. The HARE and
the HATTER are using the DORMOUSE as a cushion, resting
their elbows on it and talking over its head.

ALICE

It must be very uncomfortable for the Dormouse, only
as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind. (*Moves
toward table.*)

MARCH HARE and MAD HATTER

No room—no room!

ALICE

There's plenty of room! (*She seats herself in a large
armchair at the head of the table.*)

MARCH HARE (*encouragingly*)

Have some wine.

ALICE

I don't see any wine.

MARCH HARE

There isn't any.

ALICE

Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it.

MARCH HARE

It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE

I didn't know it was your table. It's laid for a great many more than three.

MAD HATTER (*who has been staring steadily at ALICE ever since her arrival*)

Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE

You should learn not to make personal remarks. It's very rude.

MAD HATTER (*the HATTER opens his eyes very wide at this.*)

Why is a raven like a writing desk?

ALICE (*to herself*)

Come, we shall have some fun now. I'm glad they've begun asking riddles. (*Aloud.*) I believe I can guess that!

MAD HATTER

Do you mean you think you could find out the answer to it?

ALICE

Exactly so.

MARCH HARE

Then why don't you say what you mean?

ALICE

I do. At least—at least I mean what I say. That's the same thing, you know.

MAD HATTER

Not the same thing a bit. Why, you might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see."

MARCH HARE

You might just as well say that "I like what I get" is the same thing as "I get what I like."

STOP
~~DORMOUSE~~ (*sleepily*)

You might just as well say that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe."

MAD HATTER

It is the same thing with you. (*Silence. ALICE tries to concentrate on ravens and writing desks. The HATTER takes his watch out of his pocket and examines it and the HARE nibbles at a piece of bread and butter he holds between his paws, like a carrot. The DORMOUSE sleeps on. The HATTER shakes his watch and listens to it.*) What day of the month is it?

ALICE

The fourth.

MAD HATTER (*sighing*)

Two days wrong! (*Angrily.*) I told you butter wouldn't suit the works.

MARCH HARE (*meekly*)

It was the best butter.