

VII—A MAD TEA-PARTY

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it; a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep.

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it. "No room! No room!" they cried out when they saw Alice coming. "There's *plenty* of room!" said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this, but all he said was "Why is a raven like a writing-desk?"

"I'm glad they've begun asking riddles—I believe I can guess that," she added aloud.

"Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?" said the March Hare.

"Exactly so," said Alice.

"Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.

"I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know."

"You might just as well say," added the Dormouse, which seemed to be talking in its sleep, "that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe!'"

"It *is* the same thing with you," said the Hatter, and he poured a little hot tea upon its nose. The Dormouse shook its head impatiently and said, without opening its eyes, "Of course, of course; just what I was going to remark myself."



"Have you guessed the riddle yet?" the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.

"No, I give it up," Alice replied. "What's the answer?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," said the Hatter.

"Nor I," said the March Hare.

Alice gave a weary sigh. "I think you might do something better with the time," she said, "than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers."

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

"I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more."

"You mean you can't take *less*," said the Hatter; "it's very easy to take *more* than nothing."

At this, Alice got up and walked off. The Dormouse fell asleep instantly and neither of the others took the least notice of her going, though she looked back once or twice; the last time she saw them, they were trying to put the Dormouse into the tea-pot.



The Trial of the Knave of Hearts.

"At any rate, I'll never go *there* again!" said Alice, as she picked her way through the wood. "It's the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life!" Just as she said this, she noticed that one of the trees had a door leading right into it. "That's very curious!" she thought. "I think I may as well go in at once." And in she went.

Once more she found herself in the long hall and close to the little glass table. Taking the little golden key, she unlocked the door that led into the garden. Then she set to work nibbling at the mushroom (she had kept a piece of it in her pocket) till she was about a foot high; then she walked down the little passage; and *then*—she found herself at last in the beautiful garden, among the bright flower-beds and the cool fountains.