

**TEA PARTY IN WONDERLAND**

ADAPTED FROM ALICE

CHARACTERS: (1W, 3M AND OR W)

**ALICE**

**THE MAD HATTER**

**THE MARCH HARE**

**THE DORMOUSE**

SETTING:

A TEA PARTY IN WONDERLAND

This is the classic scene from Alice in Wonderland; when Alice has tea with the MAD HATTER, MARCH HARE, and the forever-sleepy

DORMOUSE. In my adaptation, ALICE is a know-it-all preteen whose world is literally turned upside down by her trip to Wonderland. This allows her to see herself from a whole new perspective. In this scene, ALICE is driven to learn more about the Queen who presides over the lovely garden that she spied through a tiny door upon arrival in Wonderland. Her crazed tea-party partners challenge her certainty and mover her one step closer to learning from her adventures. As the scene begins, ALICE is pondering which way to go.

**ALICE:**

The Cheshire Cat said I was to go this way. Or was it that way? Oh, dear, I'm quite turned around.

(Suddenly, the MAD HATTER, MARCH HARE, and the DORMOUSE come rushing on with a huge picnic cloth spread for tea.)

**ALICE:** A tea party! How lovely. And I am quite hungry.

**MAD HATTER and MARCH HARE:**

(Singing.) "Twinkle Twinkle, little bat. How I wonder what you're at." (They do a crazed dance up and down the tablecloth.) "Up above the world so high. Like a tea tray in the sky." "Twinkle, twinkle –

(Alice sits down.)

**MAD HATTER and MARCH HARE:** No room!

**MARCH HARE:** No room!

**ALICE:** There's plenty of room.

**MARCH HARE:** Have some wine.

**ALICE:** I don't see any wine.

**MARCH HARE:** There isn't any.

(Big laugh from MARCH HARE and MAD HATTER.)

**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:** You have places for a great many more than three. And I've been walking a long ways, and I thought you might –

**MAD HATTER:** Your hair wants cutting.

**ALICE:** Gracious! You should learn not to make personal remarks. It's very rude. And you should hold your teacup thusly –

(Alice reaches for a teacup, but the MAD HATTER cuts her off.)

MAD HATTER: Why is a raven like a writing desk?

ALICE: Is that a riddle? I believe I can guess that.

MARCH HARE: Do you mean that you can find out the answer to it?

ALICE: Exactly so.

MARCH HARE: Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE: I do! At least I mean what say – that's the same thing, you know.

MAD HATTER: (Challenging her.) No t 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."

DORMOUSE: (Lifting his head 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. (The Dormouse is asleep again.)

ALICE: Words mean what we choose them to mean – nothing more or less. That's what the Cheshire Cat said.

MAD HATTER: Did he!

MARCH HARE: Well!

ALICE: Might I have a piece of cake?

MAD HATTER: What day of the month is it?

ALICE: The fourth

MAD HATTER: Two days wrong! (Shaking his broken watch.) I told you butter wouldn't suit the works.

ALICE: You've put butter in his watch?

MARCH HARE: It was the best butter?  
(The mad hatter pours tea on the Dormouse's nose.)

DORMOUSE: (Sleepily.) Of course, of course. Just what I was going to remark myself.

ALICE: (Reaching for a biscuit.) Butter belongs on biscuits.

MAD HATTER: (Moving them out of her reach.) Have you guessed the riddle yet?

ALICE: I give up. What's the answer?

MAD HATTER: I haven't the slightest idea.

MARCH HARE: Nor I.  
(They exchange a mad sigh.)

ALICE: Honestly! You might do something better with time than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers!

MAD HATTER: If you knew Time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk of wasting it. It's him.

ALICE: What?

MAD HATTER: I dare say you've never even spoke to Time. If you were on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you like with the clock.

ALICE: Really? What does Time look like? Do you talk to him?

MAD HATTER: Not I! We quarreled last March, just before he – (pointing to the MARCH HARE.) went mad, you know. It was at a concert, given by the Queen of Hearts.

ALICE: Do you know the queen? I'm longing to meet her.

MARCH HARE: He's sung for the queen!

DORMOUSE: (Sleepily.) Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle...

MAD HATTER: (singing) "Little bat!" You know the song perhaps?

ALICE: I've heard something like it.

MAD HATTER: Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse, when the Queen bawled out, "He's murdering Time! Off with his head!"

MARCH HARE: (Making a mess of 4/4 time) 1,2,3,4 and 1,2,3,4 –

ALICE: The queen of my garden said that?

MAD HATTER: And ever since he won't do a thing I ask. It's always six o'clock now. (He looks at his watch.) Change!  
(DORMOUSE, MARCH HARE, and MAD HATTER all get up and run around the tablecloth to new places. ALICE moves now, too.)

ALICE: (While racing about.) Is she so dreadfully savage – the queen, that is?

MAD HATTER: Indeed! But here, it's always six o'clock.

MARCH HARE: Tea Time!

MAD HATTER: No time to wash up the things between.

ALICE: Is that why you keep changing places?

(They all sit in new places.)

MARCH HARE: Stop being so smart. You might learn something.

ALICE: But what happens when you come to the beginning again?

MARCH HARE: Suppose we change the subject. Tell us a story. Who are you?

ALICE: Well, I knew who I was when I got up this morning, but I've changed several times since then.

MAD HATTER: Take some more tea.

ALICE: I haven't had any, so I can't take more.

MAD HATTER: You mean you can't take less. It's very easy to take more than nothing.

MARCH HARE: Wake up, dormouse.

DORMOUSE: I heard every word you fellows were saying.

MARCH HARE: (TO DORMOUSE) Tell us the story. (TO Alice.) Don't you want him to tell us a story?

ALICE: I want to play croquet with the queen. And I shall! Oh, why is everything so confusing here?!

DORMOUSE: Once upon a time, there were three little sisters, and they lived at the bottom of a well.

ALICE: How could they live at the bottom of a well? They would drown.

DORMOUSE: It was a treacle-well.

ALICE: What's a treacle?

HATTER and HARE: Molasses!

ALICE: There's no such thing as a treacle well!

HARE AND HATTER: SHHHHH!!!!!!

MARH HARE: Mind your manners.

DORMOUSE: If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story yourself.

ALICE: I don't know the – (Stopping herself.) Carry on.

DORMOUSE: So, these three little sisters were learning to draw... (he begins to fall asleep.)

ALICE: What did they draw?

DORMOUSE: Treacle!

ALICE: I don't understand!

MAD HATTER: You can draw water out of a water-well, so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle-well, eh, stupid!

ALICE: But if they were in the well, how could they –

MARCH HARE: You're thinking again!

(The three burst into laughter.)

ALICE: I've a right to think!

MARCH HARE: Upside down?

ALICE: Why not!

MARCH HARE: Keep your temper.

DORMOUSE: They were learning to draw all manner of things that begin with an "M".

HATTER AND HARE: Mmmmmmm.

ALICE: Why with an "M"?

MAD HATTER: Why not?

(Alice is so puzzled that, for once, she has no answer.)

MAD HATTER: What does the flame of a candle look like once it's blown out?

ALICE: I...

DORMOUSE: Mousetraps, the moon, memory, muchness...

MARCH HARE: Ever see a drawing of muchness?

ALICE: I... don't know.

MAD HATTER: Then you shouldn't talk.

(THE HATTER THE HARE and the DORMOUSE burst into laughter. Alice, furious, confused, and frightened jumps up.)

ALICE: Stop it! This is the stupidest tea party I was ever at in all my life. I shall never come here again.

(THE DORMOUSE is now asleep in the tablecloth. THE MARCH HARE and the MAD HATTER begin to drag him off by the corners of the cloth. But suddenly all three freeze.)

ALICE: What's happening?

DORMOUSE: (Waking up far more sinisterly.) Who are you? Why are you here?

ALICE: I don't know! I don't know!!! But I do know that I'm Alice! Alice! And I'd very much like to go home this instant. I've had quite enough of living upside down!

(THE HATTER AND THE HARE now shift positions and hold up a tiny door. They are neutral now, like stagehands.)

ALICE: Oh, but the door. The garden! (Alice crosses slowly to the door.) I must fit. I must! (Alice reaches for the door.)

**END SCENE.**