

## THE HATTER'S TEA PARTY (With apologies to Lewis Carroll)



### Alice, The March Hare, The Dormouse and The Mad Hatter

“Have some wine,” the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. “I don’t see any wine,” she remarked.

“There isn’t any,” said the March Hare.

“Then it wasn’t very civil of you to offer it,” said Alice angrily.

“It wasn’t very civil of you to play at bowls without being invited,” said the March Hare.

“I didn’t know it was *your* bowling green,” said Alice; “it has eight rinks laid for a great many more than three bowlers.”

“You don’t know how to bowl,” said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

“You should learn not to make personal remarks,” Alice said with some severity; “it’s very rude.”

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he *said* was, “Why is a bowling green like a writing-desk?”

“Come, we shall have some fun now!” thought Alice. “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.”

“Not the same thing a bit!” said the Hatter. “You might just as well say that “My bowl is on the jack” is the same thing as “The jack is on my bowl!””

“You might just as well say,” added the March Hare, “that “I like bowling when I win” is the same thing as “I win when I like bowling!””

“You might just as well say,” added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, “that “I breathe when I bowl” is the same thing as “I bowl when I breathe”!”

“It *is* the same thing with you,” said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped, and the party sat silent for a minute, while Alice thought over all she could remember about bowling greens and writing-desks, which wasn’t much.

The Hatter was the first to break the silence. “What day of the month is it?” he said, turning to Alice: he had taken his watch out of his pocket, and was looking at it uneasily, shaking it every now and then, and holding it to his ear.

Alice considered a little, and then said “The fourth.”

“Two days wrong!” sighed the Hatter. “I told you to wind up the watch before our bowling game!” he added looking angrily at the March Hare.

Alice had been looking over his shoulder with some curiosity. “What a funny watch!” she remarked. “It tells the day of the month, and doesn’t tell what o’clock it is!”

“Why should it?” muttered the Hatter. “Bowling is such a dreadfully *slow* game. Besides, does *your* watch tell you what year it is?”

“Of course not,” Alice replied very readily: “but that’s because it stays the same year for such a long time together.”

“Which is just the case with *mine*,” said the Hatter.

Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter’s remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. “I don’t quite understand you,” she said, as politely as she could.

“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 sighed wearily. “I think you might do something better with the time,” she said, “than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.”

**Notes:**

Although the Hatter and the March Hare didn’t know the answer to the riddle, every lawn bowler knows that bowling greens and writing desks are flat surfaces upon which many mistakes are made.