

From Alice in Blunderland

The Mad Hatter's Committee Meeting

The Mad Hatter was in the Chair. "Order, Order" he cried, and Disorder clumped noisily out of the room.

"The Minutes of the last meeting" he said imperiously.

The White Knight asked which Minutes he wanted. "The Minutes that go on for days and days, the Minutes that go on for hours, or the Minutes that go on only for seconds?"

"That's a difficult one" said the Mad Hatter. "Shall we take the Minutes as read?"

"I can't read." said Doormouse.

"Pretend to." said the Mad Hatter.

"How do you pretend to?" said Doormouse still reluctant to agree.

"Like you always do." said the Mad Hatter, getting just a little bit irritated..

Alice looked around the table. It was a well attended meeting. The March Hare, the Cheshire Cat, the White Rabbit, the White Queen, The Knave of Hearts, Caterpillar, Tweedledum and Tweedledee were all in their place. Doormouse was under his.

And a very small black fly had settled on the wall behind the Mad Hatter's Chair.

"The Minutes are agreed." said the Mad Hatter.

"Apologies for absence?" asked the Mad Hatter. "Humpty Dumpty" said the White Knight. "He had a serious accident since we last met."

"Any Correspondence?" asked the Mad Hatter.

"Yes, two matters" replied the White Knight. "we have just had a new Plan from the Ogre Queen. It's on the table. It is an all singing and dancing Plan."

Alice noticed that an attractive book on the table suddenly started dancing a highland jig and at the same time sang the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah.

"What's in the Plan?" asked the Cheshire Cat.

"There's meetings". "Great." said the Cheshire Cat. "New partnerships". "Wonderful." said Caterpillar. "And there's much more delusion." said the Mad Hatter. "Don't you mean Inclusion?" said the White Knight. "A Freudian slip. said the Mad Hatter with a wry smile.

"I move we buy it."

"Can we afford it?" asked Doormouse suddenly waking up.

"We get paid to buy it, twice the actual cost" said the White Knight helpfully.

"I am still not sure we can afford it" said Doormouse.

"Go back to sleep" said the Mad Hatter. And Doormouse did as he was told.

"Then that's agreed?" Nods all round, including Doormouse who was nodding away with the rest of them.

"What's the other letter?" asked the Mad Hatter.

"We are going to be inspected by the two blind mice." Said White Knight.

"My God" said the March Hare. "No, by two blind mice" said the White Knight..

"I thought there were three of them" said Caterpillar, suddenly getting a word in edgeways.

"One of them has just had a successful cataract operation" said the White Knight. "Why isn't he here then?" asked Caterpillar. "He's back in hospital with post traumatic shock ... seeing things for the first time knocked him gaga."

Alice noticed that that the visit from the two blind mice caused no great concern. "Aren't you worried?" She asked.

"We've just bought the Plan" said the Mad Hatter.

"Off with our heads if we hadn't" observed the March Hare.

Alice saw that everyone was laughing hilariously.

"Let's get down to the main business of the meeting" said the Mad Hatter. "There is a resolution on the table, moved by the Knave of Hearts and seconded by the March Hare. -

'The Moon is made of cheese' - 'Knave of Hearts over to you.'

"I like cheese and I can't do without it" started the Knave of Hearts.

"Not totally relevant" said Caterpillar. "Not relevant maybe, but important" replied the Knave of Hearts, just a trifle aggressively.

"Anyway" he continued, "you can see for yourself it's made of cheese. It's round."

At this point the March Hare intervened. "I second the motion." he said firmly. "I have the evidence. I've been given a piece." "Where is it then?" asked Alice unable to contain her curiosity. "I've swallowed it" replied the March Hare. "And I've swallowed the hook, the line and the sinker that came with it."

Alice's curiosity turned to incredulity. "You swallowed the sinker? Wasn't it a bit indigestible?" "It was the very first time I swallowed it" replied the March Hare, "but you get used to it. It is now a part of my regular diet." Tweedledum interposed "That's my experience too." And Tweedledee agreed. "Me too" he said.

"Well" said the Mad Hatter "two people have said that the Moon is made of cheese, one has actually eaten some. Can there be any reasonable doubt here? I frankly will go further. I think that the Moon is made of the best English cheddar."

"An amendment" intervened Caterpillar. "I believe it's Wensleydale."
"Cheddar" replied the Mad Hatter firmly, and Caterpillar crawled under a leaf on the table.

Alice was still unconvinced. "What about the moon-rock brought back from the moon landing.?" She asked. "American propaganda against the Russians" replied the Knave of Hearts. "The landing was filmed in the Nevada desert and that's where the rock came from."

"Well I'll eat my hat" said the Mad Hatter and promptly did so.

There was a respectful silence while this was going on.

When he finished, he asked whether the motion was agreed. "Nemine contradicente" said the White Knight. And with nobody quite knowing what that meant, they all nodded their heads including Doormouse who was still nodding away quietly under his seat.

At this point a very strange thing happened. The small black fly on the wall behind the Mad Hatter's chair suddenly took off, whizzed three times round the room at great speed, buzzing all the way. Then, Alice noticed, it suddenly turned into a wasp and stung the Mad Hatter right on the tip of his nose.

The meeting was then adjourned.

With credit to Lewis Carroll