

DORMOUSE

Loathe tea.

\*START

MAD HATTER

All right, then. Since you insist:  
Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

ALICE

You tell me.

MAD HATTER

I haven't the faintest idea.

*(The MAD HATTER, MARCH HARE, and DORMOUSE mock ALICE with their laughter.)*

ALICE

I think you might do something better with your time  
than waste it asking riddles with no answer.

DORMOUSE

You're the one who's asking.

MAD HATTER

*(With a look to the MARCH HARE)*

If you knew Time as we do, child,  
you wouldn't talk of wasting it.

ALICE

*(To MARCH HARE)*

You waste time by not spending it.

DORMOUSE

*("Spare us!")*

Dear. Dear. Me.

MARCH HARE

*(To ALICE)*

I dare say, you have never spoken to Time.

MAD HATTER

We, we've spent so many years with him,  
and you, you are just meeting him.

DORMOUSE

So, prithee: pass the scones.

MARCH HARE

Time for you to riddle yourself home.

DORMOUSE

Leave us alone.

ALICE

No, I won't.  
It's you, who talk in riddles.

MAD HATTER

Come, we live in riddles, Child—  
and sometimes there's no answering them.

*(The lights and feeling shift; a sense of the shattered world of London suffuses the party.  
A riddle:)*

What leaves home as Mummy's hero,  
then crawls back a less-than-zero:

like a teacup chip-chip-chipped,  
like an egg God dropped for kicks?

*(ALICE stares at the MAD HATTER with a new compassion.)*

ALICE

You?

MAD HATTER

Ahh, but I am no longer me.

*(A beat)*

My mate, you know, was drop-dead funny.  
Then he dropped dead— isn't that funny?

MARCH HARE

Indeed.