

Who *Did* Steal the Tarts? (courtroom puzzle)

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(to figure out the thief, find the one major logical inconsistency between the testimonies and the facts!)

the Mad Hatter's testimony

I couldn't have stolen the tarts. It is true that I eat plenty of sweets — but I already have scones with my tea, and I haven't started on either. Besides, on the day in question, I was occupied, trying new hats on. I couldn't have been at the scene of the theft if I was busy trying hats on, could I have? In fact, I'm wearing an entirely different hat than the one I was wearing yesterday. I don't have any proof of that, so you'll have to take my word for it. You can take my words at face value, though, because I am an honest salesperson. If we can assume all honest salespersons tell the truth about whether or not they've stolen tarts, we can deduce that I did not steal the tarts. Thank you very much.

the Knave's testimony

This is a horrid mistake. I am nothing but a playing card whose wristwatch was fifteen minutes fast. I was to testify for an entirely separate case that begins at 11:15 in the morning, so I arrived at what I believed was the exact correct time. You've certainly hazarded a guess at this point: it turns out it is really only 11 o'clock, when the trial on the tarts began just now. I am supposed to testify for this other case about other French desserts in fifteen minutes. But if you must know, it

wouldn't make sense that I stole the tarts. At the time of the crime I was discussing with my dealer my actual trial (which commences as this one adjourns). So I did not steal the tarts.

the Cook's testimony

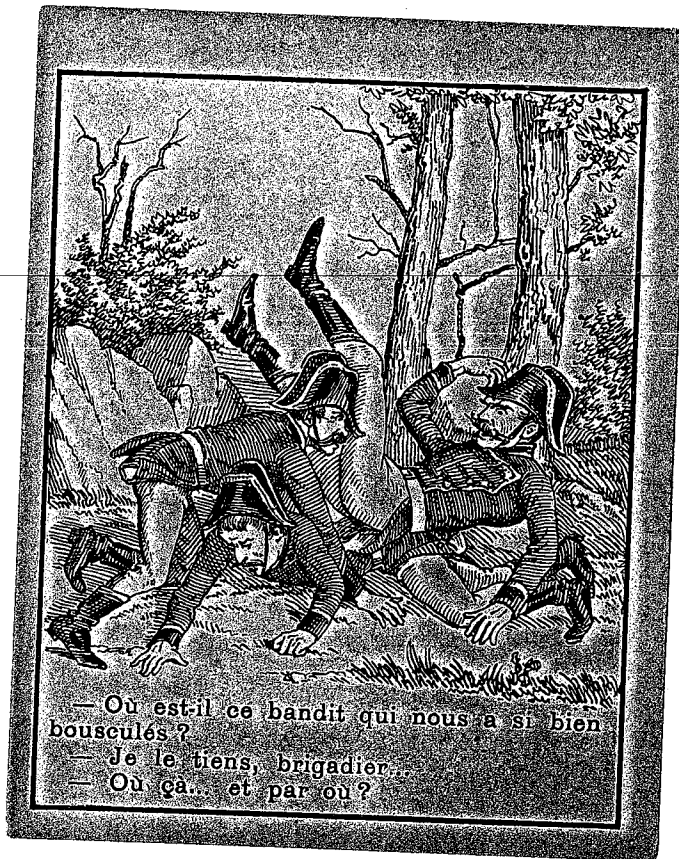
There's no way I could have stolen the tarts! I've been serving the Duchess for dozens of weeks and I would never do that to her. And since I can cook my own sweets, why would I steal them? Any cook for the duchess worthy of the job knows how to make tarts on her own — you just add pepper — to the pan, and then you . . . add more pepper. I know how to do it, stop staring at me! Anyway, it's impossible that I was present on the day the tarts were stolen, anyway; I was busy keeping nitwits out of my kitchen. Anyone enters my kitchen, I whack them with a pan! ... Not that I'm a violent cook! No, no. Even if I was, it's not as if violent cooks are more likely to rob tarts than nonviolent ones. I'm innocent, I tell you! I didn't steal the tarts!

the March Hare's testimony

Of course I didn't steal the tarts! Let's be level-headed, shall we? To begin, we are more than a week from the month of March, and everyone knows that no march hares go mad until then. No march hare steal the tarts unless he is mad; we thus know that, given it is not March, and that I am not mad, it is absolutely unfathomable that I could have stolen the tarts in the month of March. It's as simple as arithmetic. Disregarding all that, I was not there for the scene of the theft; it was tea time, so I was enjoying my cup as any hare would be. Who would suppose I could steal them if I was busy drinking tea? What bunch of nonsense that claim would be! As you can see, there is no possibility that I am guilty. I did not steal the tarts.

the Dormouse's testimony

I couldn't've stolen the tarts. I was sleeping. No one steals tarts while they are sleeping; it would be illogical to say so. One can only do a handful of things while they sleep: rolling, breathing, twitching, sighing, snoring, dreaming. Oh my, it seems a dormouse could do quite a number of things while they are sleeping! He could even dream about stealing the tarts . . . but I couldn't've! I was sleeping, like I said, and I couldn't've stolen tarts while asleep . . . though perhaps it was only in my dream that I was sleeping, and during the timeframe of the crime, I was stealing the tarts! Oh my, please tell me this is a dream! I didn't steal the tarts, awake or otherwise!



The Facts of the Case (to figure out the thief, find the one major logical inconsistency between the testimonies and these facts!)

- Cook has a number of priors for cooking pan battery
- Mad Hatter has a solid reputation for fair hat prices and impressive sales
- Cook's food makes people sneeze (rather than full)
- No one remembers what hat the Mad Hatter wore yesterday
- Knave's trial at 11:15am is for arson, not theft (setting pastries on fire)
- According to science, march hares do not go mad until March
- March Hare last seen enjoying tea time
- Knave was seen with his (card) dealer in the hours before the crime
- Dormouse has been diagnosed with schizophrenia
- Cook goes to counseling for anger management
- Dormouse has been diagnosed with narcolepsy
- Knave is diffident about being a playing card because of his lack of tendons and joints

- March Hare has been seen multitasking while drinking tea; e.g., drinking tea and quibbling with the Hatter
- Cook has been hired by Queen for dozens of weeks
- Dormouse has been hospitalized for serious episodes of paranoia
- March Hare only seen enjoying tea time
- Mad Hatter is always seen with snacks and tea but never eating or drinking them

Solution Below:

The inconsistency is that while the knave claims he is only there because his wristwatch has the wrong time, the “facts of the case” state that, as a playing card, the Knave has neither tendons nor joints. He must be lying because he says he looked at a *wristwatch*.

