

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

By Lewis Carroll

CHAPTER 3:

A RACE

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar



They were a strange looking crowd as they stood or sat on the bank at the edge of the pool of tears. The wings and tails of the birds drooped to the earth. The fur of the beasts clung close to them and all were wet and cross as could be.

The first thought, of course, was how to get dry. They had a long talk a-bout this, and Alice joined in with them as if she had known them all her life. But it was hard to work out what was best.



"What I want to say," said the Do-do at last, "is that the best thing to get us dry would be a race."

"What kind of race?" asked Alice, not that she wanted to know. But the Do-do had paused as if it thought that some one should speak, and no one else said a word.

"Why," said the Do-do, "the best way to make it plain, is to do it." (And as you might like to try this some cold day, I'll tell you how the Do-do did it.) First it marked out a race-course in a sort of ring (it didn't care much for the shape), and then all the crowd were placed on the course, here and there. There was no "One, two, three, and here we go," but they ran when they liked and left off when they liked, so that no one could tell when the race was ended.



When they had been running half an hour or so they were all quite dry. The Do-do called out, "The race is o-ver!" and they all crowd-ed a-round and asked, "But who has won?" The Do-do could not tell, at first, but sat for a long time with one claw pressed to its head while the rest wait-ed and did not speak.

At last the Do-do said, "All have won and each must have a prize."

"But who is to give them?" they all asked at once.

"Why, her of course," said the Do-do, as it pointed to Alice with one long claw. The whole party at once crowded around her as they called out, "Where's our prize? Where's our prize?" Alice did not know what to do, but she pulled from her pocket, a little box of cakes (by some strange, good luck they did not get wet while she was swimming in the pool), and handed them around as prizes. There was one piece all round.

"But she must have a prize too, you know," said the Mouse.

"Of course," the Do-do said. "What else have you got?" he said as he turned to Alice.



"A thimble," said Alice looking quite sad.

"Hand it here," said the Do-do.

Then they all crowded around her once more, while the Do-do handed the thimble back to Alice and said, "We beg that you accept this fine thimble;" and when it had made this short speech they all cheered.

Alice thought the whole thing quite foolish, but they all looked so serious that she did not dare to laugh, and as she could not think what to say she bowed and took the thimble, while she looked as proud as she could.

The next thing was to eat the cakes. This caused some noise, as the large birds said they could not taste theirs, and the small ones choked and had to be patted on the back. It was over at last and they sat down in a ring and begged the Mouse to tell them a tale.

"You said you would tell us why you hate cats and dogs," said Alice.

"Mine is a long and a sad tale," said the Mouse, as it turned to Alice with a sigh.

"It's a long tail, I'm sure," said Alice, looking down at the Mouse's tail; "but why do you call it sad?"



"I won't tell you," said the Mouse, as it got up and walked away.

"Please come back and tell us your tale," called Alice; and all joined in, "Yes, please do!" but the Mouse shook its head and walked on and was soon out of sight.

"I wish I had Di-nah here." said Alice. "She'd soon fetch it back."



"And who is Di-nah, if I may dare to ask such a thing?" said one of the birds. Alice was glad to talk of her pet. "Di-nah's our cat; and she's such a fine one to catch mice. And oh, I wish you could see her chase a bird! Why she'll eat a bird as soon as look at it!"

This speech caused a great stir in the party. Some of the birds rushed off at once. One old jay bird wrapped it-self up with care and said, "I must get home; the night air doesn't suit my throat!" and a wren called out to her brood, "come, my dears! It's time you were all in bed." Soon they all left and Alice was left all a-lone.

"I wish I hadn't told them a-bout Di-nah," she said to her-self.
"No one seems to like her down here, and I'm sure she's the best cat in the world! Oh, my dear Di-nah! Shall I ev-er see you a-gain?" And here Al-ice burst in to tears, for she felt ver-y sad and lone-ly.

In a short time she heard the pat-ter of feet, and she looked up with the hope that the Mouse had changed its mind and come back to tell his "long and sad tale."

