

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

CHAPTER 9 :

THE MOCK TURTLE

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar

As the Duch-ess a-p-proached the par-ty with the sold-ier she turned to A-lice.

"How glad I am to see you once more, my dear!" said the Duch-ess as she took Al-ice's arm, and they walked off side by side.

Al-ice was glad to see her in such a good mood, and thought to her-self that the Duch-ess might not be as bad as she first thought.

Then Al-ice fell in-to deep thought a-bout what she would do if she were a Duch-ess.



She quite for-got the Duch-ess by her side, and jumped when she heard her voice so close to her ear.

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"You have some-thing on your mind, my dear, and that makes you for-get to talk. I can't tell you just now what the mor-al of that is, but I will think of it in a bit."

"Are you sure it has one?" asked Al-ice.

"Tut, tut, child!" said the Duch-ess; "all things have a mor-al if you can find it." And she moved up close to Al-ice's side as she spoke.

Al-ice did not like the Duch-ess to be so close, but she did-n't want to be rude, so she did-n't say so.

"The game is not so bad now," said Al-ice, think-ing she should fill in the time with some talk.

"It is so," said the Duch-ess, "and the mor-al of that is... 'Oh, 'it's love, 'it's love, that makes the world go round!'"

"Some one said, it's be-cause each one minds his own work," said Al-ice.

"Ah! well, it means much the same thing," said the Duch-ess, then add-ed, "and the mor-al of that is... 'Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves.'"

"How she likes to find strange mor-als in things," said Al-ice.

"Why don't you talk more and not think so much?" asked the Duch-ess.

"I have a right to think," said Al-ice in a sharp tone, for she was tired.

"Just as much right," said the Duch-ess, "as pigs have to fly; and the more..."

But here the voice of the Duch-ess stopped in the mid-dle of her pet word, "mor-al," and Al-ice felt the arm that linked hers shake with fright.

Al-ice looked up and there was the Queen in front of them with her arms fold-ed, and a big frown on her face.

"A fine day, your ma-jes-ty!" said the Duch-ess, in a weak voice.

"Now, I'm warn-ing you," shout-ed the Queen, with a stomp of her foot on the ground as she spoke; "ei-ther you or your head must be off, and in a-bout half the time it takes! Make your choice!" The Duch-ess took her choice and was gone in an in-stant.

"Now let's get on with the game," said the Queen to Al-ice. Al-ice was in too great a fright to speak, so she went with her, back to the cro-quet ground.

The guests had all sat down in the shade to rest while the Queen was a-way, but as soon as they saw her they rushed back to the play the game.

The Queen said if they were not back in their places at once, it would cost them their lives.

All the time the game went on, the Queen kept shouting, "Off with his head!" or "Off with her head!" so that by the end of half an hour, there was no one left on the grounds but the King, the Queen, and Alice.

Then the Queen, quite out of breath, said to Alice, "Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?"

"No," said Alice, "I don't know what a Mock-turtle is."

"It's the thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from," the Queen said.

"I've never seen or heard of one," Alice said.

"Come on then, he will tell you his story," said the Queen.

As they walked off, Alice heard the King say softly to all those the Queen had sent to death, "You may all go free!"

"What a good thing," thought Alice, for she felt very sad that all those men must have their heads cut off.

They soon came to where a Gryphon was fast asleep in the sun.



"Get up!" said the Queen, "and take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle.

"I must leave now;" she said, and she walked a-way and left Alice with the Gry-phon.

Alice did not like its looks, but she thought she would be as safe with it, as she was with the Queen, so she wait-ed.

The Gry-phon sat up and rubbed its eyes. It watched the Queen un-til she was out of sight and then it laughed.

"What fun!" it said, half to it-self, half to Alice.

"What is the fun?" she asked.

"Why,... the Queen..." the gry-phon said. "It's a hab-it of hers; they nev-er cut off those heads, you know. Come on."

Soon they saw the Mock Tur-tle sitting sad and a-lone on a ledge of rock, and as they came clos-er, Alice could hear him sigh as if his heart would break.

"What makes him so sad?" Alice asked.

"It is a hab-it of his," said the Gry-phon; "he's not sad, you know. Come on!"

So they went up to the Mock Tur-tle, who looked up at them with large eyes full of tears, but did not speak.



"This young la-dy," said the Gry-phon, "wants to know a-bout your past life, she does."

"I will tell it to her," said the Mock Tur-tle in a deep, sad voice. "Sit down both of you and don't speak a word un-til I fin-ish."

So they sat down, and no one spoke for a ver-y long time.

"Once," said the Mock Tur-tle at last, with a deep sigh, "I was a real Tur-tle. When we were young we went to school in the sea.

We were taught by an old Tur-tle... we used to call him Tor-toise..."

"Why did you call him Tor-toise, if he wasn't one?" Al-ice asked.

"He **taught us**, that's why," said the Mock Tur-tle: "you are quite strange not to know that!"

"Shame on you to ask such a sim-ple thing," add-ed the Gry-phon. They both sat and looked at poor Al-ice, who felt as if she wan-ted to sink into the earth.

Then the Gry-phon said to the Mock Tur-tle, "Car-ry on! I haven't got all day"

The Mock Turtle said, "Yes, well, we went to school in the sea, though you may not think it's true..."

"I did-n't say I did-n't be-lieve you!" said Al-ice.

"You did," said the Mock Tur-tle.

"Hold your tongue," add-ed the Gry-phon.

The Mock Tur-tle went on:

"We were taught well... in fact we went to school each day..."

"I've been to school too," said Alice; "you need-n't be so proud as all that."

"Were you taught wash-ing?" asked the Mock Tur-tle.

"Of course not," said Al-ice.

"Ah! Then yours was not a good school," said the Mock Tur-tle.

"Now at... ours... they had at the end of the day, 'French, mu-sic, and wash-ing...'"

"Washing? You couldn't have need-ed that much in the sea," said Al-ice.

"I didn't learn it," said the Mock Tur-tle, with a sigh. "I just took the first les-son."

"What was that?" asked Al-ice.

"Reel-ing and Writh-ing, of course!" the Mock Tur-tle said.

"An old eel used to come in once a week. He taught us to swim, to stretch and to faint in coils."

"What is that?" Alice asked.

"Well, I can't show you, my-self," he said: "I'm too stiff. And the Gry-phon did not learn it."

"How many hours a day did you do lessons?" asked Alice.

"Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle; "nine the next and so on."

"What a strange plan!" said Alice.

"That's why they're called lessons," said the Gry-phon: "they **less-en** from day to day."

This was such a new thing to Alice that she sat still for a long time to think and didn't speak.

Then she said, "But then there would come a day when you would have no school."

"Of course there would," said the Mock Turtle.

"What did you do then?" asked Alice.

"I'm tired of this," said the Gry-phon: "tell her about the games we played."