

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

CHAPTER 10:

THE LOBSTER DANCE

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar

The Mock Tur-tle sighed, looked at Al-ice and tried to speak, and for a min-ute or two his sobs choked his voice.

"It's like he has a bone in his throat," said the Gry-phon, and he set to work to shake him and slap him on the back.

At last the Mock Tur-tle found his voice and with tears run-ning down his cheeks, he went on:

"You may not have lived much in the sea"...

("I have-n't," said Al-ice)

"So you can-not know what a fine thing a Lob-ster Dance is!"

"No," said Al-ice. "What sort of dance is it?"



"Why," said the Gry-phon, "you first form a line on the sea-shore..."

"Two lines!" cried the Mock Tur-tle. "Seals, tur-tles, and so on; then... when you've cleared all the small fish out of the way..."

"That takes a bit of time," add-ed in the Gry-phon.

"You move to the front twice..."

"Each with a lob-ster by his side!" cried the Gry-phon.

"Of course," the Mock Tur-tle said: "move to the front twice..."

"Change and come back in same way," said the Gry-phon.

"Then, you know," the Mock Tur-tle went on, "you throw the..."

"The lob-sters!" shout-ed the Gry-phon, with a jump in-to the air.

"As far out to sea as you can...", fin-ished the Mock Tur-tle.

"Then swim out for them," screamed the Gry-phon.

"Do a som-er-sault in the sea!" cried the Mock Tur-tle.

"Change a-gain!" yelled the Gry-phon at the top of his voice.

"Then back to land, and... that is all the first part," said the Mock Tur-tle.

Both the Gry-phon and the Mock Tur-tle had jumped a-bout like mad things all this time.

Now they sat down quite sad and still, and looked at Al-ice.

"It must be a pret-ty dance," Al-ice said.

"Would you like to see some of it?" asked the Mock Tur-tle.

"Oh, yes," she said.

"Come, let's try the first part!" said the Mock Tur-tle to the Gry-phon.

"We can do it without lob-sters, you know. Who will sing?"

"Oh..., you... sing," said the Gry-phon. "I don't know the words."

So they danced round and round Al-ice. Now and then they stepped on her toes when they passed too close.

They waved their paws to keep time, while the Mock Tur-tle sang a fun-ny kind of song, each verse of which end-ed with these words:



"Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?'

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

"Thank you, it's a fine dance to watch," said Al-ice, glad that it was o-ver at last.

"Now," said the Gry-phon, "tell us a-bout what you have seen and done in your life."

"I could tell you some of the strange things that I have seen to-day," said Al-ice, but she doubt-ed they would want to hear it.

"All right, go on," they both cried.

So Al-ice told them what she had done that day, from the time when she first saw the White Rab-bit.

They came up quite close to her, one on each side, and sat still un-til she got to the part where she tried to say,

"You are old, Fath-er Wil-liam," and the words came out all wrong.

The Mock Tur-tle drew in a long breath and said, "That is quite strange!"

"It's as strange as it can be," said the Gry-phon.

"It came out all wrong!" the Mock Tur-tle said, while he seemed to be deep in thought. "I should like to hear her try to say some-thing now. Tell her to be-gin."

He looked at the Gry-phon as if he thought he had the right to make Al-ice do what he wan-ted.

"Stand up and say, 'Tis the voice of the Slug-gard,'" said the Gry-phon.

"They do love to try and make me do things!" thought Al-ice.

"I might as well be at school." She stood up and tried to re-peat it, but her head was so full of the Lob-ster Dance, that she didn't know what she was say-ing, and the words came out ver-y weird:

"Tis the voice of the lob-ster; I heard him de-clare,
'You have baked me too brown, I must su-gar my hair.'
As a duck with its eye-lids, so he with his nose
Trims his belt and his but-tons, and turns out his toes."

"That's not the way I used to say it when I was a child," said the Gry-phon.

"Well, I've never heard it before," said the Mock Tur-tle, "but it makes no sense at all."

Alice did not speak; she sat down with her face in her hands, and thought, "Will things ever be the way they used to be?"

"I would like you to tell what it means," said the Mock Turtle.

"She can't do that," said the Gryphon. "Go on with the next verse."

"But his toes?" the Mock Turtle went on. "How could he turn them out with his nose?"

"Go on with the next verse," the Gryphon said once more; "it begins with 'I passed by his garden.'"

Alice thought she must do as she was told, but she felt sure it would all come out wrong, and she went on:

"I passed by his garden and marked with one eye,
How the owl and the oyster were sharing the pie."

"What... is... the use of saying all that stuff!" the Mock Turtle broke in, "if you don't say what it means as you go on? I tell you it's all non-sense."

"Yes, I think you might as well stop," said the Gryphon, and Alice was glad to.

"Shall we try the Lob-ster dance once more?" the Gry-phon asked, "or would you like the Mock Tur-tle to sing you a song?"

"Oh, a song please, if the Mock Tur-tle does not mind," Alice said with so much zest that the Gry-phon threw back his head and said, "Hm!

Well, each one to his own taste. Sing her 'Tur-tle Soup,' will you, old fel-low?"

The Mock Tur-tle heaved a deep sigh, and in a voice choked with sobs, be-gan his song. But just then, the cry of "The tri-al is on!" was heard from a long way off.

"Come on," cried the Gry-phon. He took Al-ice by the hand, and ran off, not wait-ing to h0ear the rest of the song.

"What trial is it?" Al-ice pant-ed as she ran, but the Gry-phon on-ly said, "Come on!" and ran as fast as he could.

