If I Should Fall

by karrenia_rune

Summary

Basically what it says on the tin, a look at the friendship between the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle.

Title: If I Should Fall  
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Author: karrenia (Karen)  
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"If I Should Fall" by Karen 

The sun had just set behind the western tree line for at least an hour before the object of his search came into view. To the discerning eye of the Gryphon, it did not make a very good first impression.

The Gryphon prided himself for both a keen eye and a discerning sense of smell, it would not do for a vicious rumor to be bruited about that any of his senses were dulling with age.

"That will never do,” he muttered aloud and pulled in his bronze-tipped wings closer to his bulky torso tucked and dove and came to a landing beside the boulder upon which sat the Mock Turtle.
"Go away," replied the other creature in a listless tone of voice.

"I can not," replied the Gryphon cheerily. "After all it would be very bad form to go away as soon as I've arrived, after all, I did receive your invitation." He ruffled his wings, feeling the cold winter air raise the hackles on the back of his neck and he stomped his lion's feet on the cold hard-packed ground.

"I suppose," replied the Mock Turtle. "No doubt you are right, forgive my surliness, my friend, I have not been very good company of late, even to myself."

"Is there anything I can do to help?" The Gryphon felt a tingle at the tip of his birdlike beak and tried to hold his breath, but no matter how hard he tried to suppress the urge. It bubbled up inside of him until he could not resist, and he let out a mighty sneeze and a snort.

The exhalation left a cloud of his breath to puff out in the cold winter air.

"Bless you," the Mock Turtle waved one of his flippers airily. "I'd offer you some split pea soup, but sadly I've only been able to sing about it, I've lost the recipe given to me by Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee."

"That is a shame," the Gryphon nodded in commiseration. "A bowl of soup would go down quite nicely on a night like this, and I could feel a cold front coming, as I came. No doubt, tomorrow bodes to be rather nippy."

As he said this, the Gryphon shivered and tucked his wings closer to his body. "That being said, what are you doing out in the middle of nowhere, perched like a lump on top of a boulder?"

"Thinking," replied the Mock Turtle. He lifted his head and winked his great big green, soulful eyes. "And singing about split pea soup. Let me tell you something about split pea soup, it does not taste as good as the song makes it out to be."

"Do tell," the other prompted. Knowing his friend as well as he did the Gryphon realized that he might be in for a long story and shifting his bulk on the hard-packed ground, settled in and tried to curl up into a more comfortable position.

A sudden thought struck him, and he shook his head. The Mock Turtle had been crouched on that boulder for a good while now, and whatever heat it had managed to accumulate from the sun during the day, it was probably very chilly by now.

"Well, mainly about things, things as they are, things as they might be, and things that were." The Mock Turtle lifted his head out of his black and green striped shell to look the Gryphon in the eye. "Thank you for this. I am sorry I could not offer more in the way of hospitality, but as you see I am a bit indisposed at the moment."

The Gryphon shook his head, "Those are weighty matters indeed," might you not wish to ponder them, oh, I do not know, somewhere warm and dry. I do believe I felt the first flakes of snow."

For the first time since he had come out to this out-of-the-way corner, the Mock Turtle allowed a genuine smile to split his broad lips. "I must sound like the worst sort of grump, and you are a very good friend to endure my wool-gathering. I should have put off this long ago."

The Gryphon shook his head, the snowflakes he had scented earlier had now been joined by larger flakes, by now just beginning to dust the grassy plain and covering both the Mock Turtle and his boulder in a light powdery blanket.
"I do not know, my friend. But for myself, I would like to very much get out of this damp and into someplace warm."

The other nodded and bestirred himself out of his tight roll and down and off the boulder to land with a thump and bump beside his friend. "To someplace warm and dry, then."

"Indeed," the Gryphon cheerily replied. "I am not made for such damp and dreariness."

"That will never do," the Mock Turtle replied, feeling a bit more cheery now that his friend had managed to snap him out of his deep blue funk. And whether or not he had been aware of it back into the joking, half-mocking banter of their friendship. "I owe you, my friend."

"Pshaw!" the Gryphon snorted. "What is this talk of owing?" The Gryphon continued in the same airy and nonchalant tone of voice, hoping that it would cheer up his woebegone friend.

The Gryphon was a hearty, blustery soul and he realized with a start that it actually hurt to see the Mock Turtle this glum.

On the heels of that thought, the Gryphon continued, fluffing out the feathers of his wings: "Look at it this way, I probably owe you for any number of things, and I doubt anyone is the habit of keeping score. Pay it no mind. Let us go,."

The Mock Turtle smiled again and they set off across the uneven rolling hillsides of the grasslands.

As they traveled, the bigger creature accommodating his pace to that of the smaller creature, the Mock Turtle again flashed a brighter smile, but with his head partly tucked into his shell, where the other could not possibly have seen it. "Thank you, my friend, for everything. I needed this like I needed another hole in my head."

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