

# Turtle Boarding

## Prologue

Early in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Century the last remaining animal language was finally and fully understood. The findings permeated and permanently changed Western Civilization.

And what animal was it?

It was the Turtle.

But our story is a few centuries earlier before Turtle Boarding spawned whole new lines of sport for humans throughout the World and changed the direction of Western Civilization. Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Turtle Boarding was Worldwide too, but only the Turtles knew it, played it, and absorbed the teachings and philosophy that were the backbone sort of speak of one of the oldest and widespread species on Earth—

*Cut to Song....*

Turtle Boarding, here we GO  
Turtle Boarding, going really Slow  
    Onk, Achymon, Oka, Oka, Oka  
    Onk, Achymon  
Your Boards in Line but about to Spill  
Shortboy there better be the keel  
    Onk, Achymon, Oka, Oka, Oka  
    Onk, Achymon  
Queen Lucy is still a thrill  
She don't get wet and she never spill  
    Onk, Achymon, Oka, Oka, Oka

*Fade*\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter One

“Good Morning friends. It’s me, Big Tom Boxer.”

“Annnnnnd Jimmy Slider.”

“Here again to bring you live and on vibes the 1000<sup>th</sup>  
Southern Regional Turtle Board Races---  
FRreeeeeeeeeeeeesh Water (big cheer in background)  
Division!!”

“And Big Tom, there has never been such gathering at  
the pods, ponds, lakes and streams where this contest  
will sloooowly unwind.”

“That’s right Jimmy. More contestants, contestant  
teams and fan clubs all here to bring on by  
Sloooooooow progress this year’s champs.”

“And Big Tom, don’t forget who’s here.”

“That’s right Jimmy...Queen Lucy is here in real life to  
captain again and for the 6<sup>th</sup> year straight the Champion  
coed and all girl teams—“

“Makes my rear flippers go Crazy just thinking about it  
Big Tom.”

“Jimmy, as you know there have already been official  
complaints listed with the Regional Rules Committee by  
last year’s losers (at least 5 individual team boards and  
coaches) after the committee okayed all boards that  
Queen Lucy will lead—“

“That’s right Big Tom. And their rationale was impeccable.”

Both together, “She’s good for the Sport and females like her are why Turtles still go!!!”

It was one day before the race and Queen Lucy was sprawled on a flat rock about 5 feet above the water’s edge. She had been there for one day already and today she and other captains would complete their view of the lake. It was the perfect size, not too big to see everything and not too small so the boards would not be crowded (except at the beginning and those that were left at the end). The center island was almost finished with the rigging. From where she rested it was easy to see the tight turn which the champion races made even harder. “Well it would not be champion if it was not hard. Alligator hard,” she thought.

She had watched from sunup to sunset and through the night and would watch into the night again until the ref’s and judges closed it down to do the last predawn preparations. She knew she had seen enough, every ripple, cross current, shade area and underwater change in depth which could influence the current right when you did not want it to. She knew by her sun reading exactly when the currents would speed up as the day warmed and slowed down as the sun moved to night time position. But she would watch it all again today. Besides she would have to go through it in total detail with her coach, “The Yellow Wonder.” And there he was coming from the other side of the lake to talk to her now.

The whole crew on the rigging island stopped work to point at him, to each other, and to cheer for him. As he swam past them he raised his right front flipper out of the water and in their direction to acknowledge the welcome. He had been as big a thrill as she was in his day and had made the change from athlete to coach seamlessly. His school trained all board types and all types of racing (solo, team, tethered and freestyle, male, female, and coed).

“He deserves to be a legend. And no gimmicks,” she thought.

As he neared the embankment on her side he waved to her and she waved back.

“Have you got it all?” He said as he climbed out of the water and started up to her rock.

“I think so.” She said mimicking the voice of a junior racer.

“Well let’s talk about it and see.” He was up beside her now and they both scanned the whole lake and shoreline one more time before she started to speak.

“Directly across from us there is an underground stream emptying at that indention,” she said. The other turtle looked over it approvingly.

“About midday it flows the strongest. So on the first or second turn we will use it as a slowdown, maybe even near full stop. It won’t work long cause as soon as I use it the team boards will post one of theirs to block me.

But I should be able to pass at least two boards at that spot and that will be our beginning.”

The other turtle nodded slightly.

She turned a little more to the right, “You see where the trees come down to the water...There, there and there?” She noted as she pointed with her right front flipper without it leaving the rock.

The other turtle followed her guide but said nothing.

“We will use each underwater root as a slowing with broadside approach and full keel. I will be careful of anything that might touch the board or the keel, but on the first one we will not try.... to take advantage of it. It sticks up more than the others.”

“Think they will ram it? Pretty tough for an opening round” the other turtle commented.

“Well, we have to clear the low half early if we do not want a big crowd at the end.” The other turtle nodded. She continued and described every useful curve of the shore and every change in currents in shallow or deep water till she had completed the description of water, depth, obstacle, and above all the current changes at the different times of day into night and into early morning.

When she was finished she looked at her coach eye to eye, “Well, what do you think?” This time her voice was normal and reflected the experienced leader and athlete that she was.

The Yellow Wonder looked around the whole lake one more long slow time. “Good,” he said.

He started to get off the rock when she added, “And I saw you with that young Red all morning yesterday and today. You should be ashamed.”

He smiled, “If they really knew what a prude you are your whole reputation would be gone. As I always say...”

And they said it together, “It is the mix of sport and show that made Turtle Boarding and keeps Turtle Boarding the number one Sport!!”

They laughed together; one as the current professional and the other as the mentor looking at his greatest joy as a coach and teacher.

“You too will teach and coach someday,” he said.

“Oh yes I can see it. Remember when Lucy was really hot. Look at her now.”

Now he was getting off the rock to do the rest of his rounds for the day, but he turned to her for a moment, “You have a new crew member coming in today.”

“He’s late. I was beginning to think I was gonna have to use a mudder.”

The coach smiled again and walked off until he reached the water, waved and moved on.

## Chapter Two

After her coach left Queen Lucy resumed her survey of the lake and shore.

It was midafternoon and she was heavily concentrating on one little outcropping at the beginning of the “champion curve” when she was interrupted by an unexpected voice right next to her.

“Wow, you must be Queen Lucy!! I have never met a living legend before” he said.

She turned slowly in the direction of the voice and saw a young but very fit turtle perched on the edge of her rock. She looked him up and down and stared directly into his eyes.

“And you must be the new crew member. You are two days late. What happened to you?”

“I was coming down the Tennessee just fine when I veered off into the recommended tributary and as I was getting ready to cross through the tunnel there was a huge metal monster wreck up on the hard path. Smoke, fire, noise... My party went to mud and had to stay there almost a day and a half. Never could make up the lost time.” He looked a little sad and worried, but not much.

“Well you will have plenty of time to catch up now. Be at the crew meeting tonight and you will learn all you need to know. Do you know our coach?”

“Only as another living legend. Wow, two in one day!”

She looked at him a little more sternly. "You will find him patient briefly and by the way crew boards are team boards. None of this attitude stuff from solo or I will substitute immediately."

"Just as it should be," he said trying to sound humble. "And by the way do I call you Lucy? Queen? Or Queen Lucy?"

He was enjoying this.

"You call me Captain from now until this race is over."

"Yes Captain." His tone had changed for real now. "Anything else Captain?"

"No."

He started off the rock and down to the shore then into the water. She did not watch where he was going but resumed her survey.



## Chapter Three

It was just after dark when Queen Lucy arrived at the bush where her crew was to meet. As the reigning champion she and her crew had the best site for this, a great view of the lake now starting to have reflections from the moon. There they were: nine red or yellows counting the new guy, three mudders and two substitute turtles (one of which was one of the biggest on the lake and a Halfling like herself).

Queen Lucy felt that feeling you get in this sport when you know you have a great team to work with. At least half of them had been with her from the first. Except for the new kid and two of the mudders, she knew them all.

“Crew I want you to meet.....What is your name?”

“Kid.”

“How appropriate.”

“Kid Red.”

“Meet Kid Red and Kid Red meet the team. Scruffy bunch, but they know what to do when it counts.”

There was a mild chuckle from the crew members but all of them looked at Kid Red and he knew they were trying to size him up.

But Queen Lucy began to speak and all of them watched and listened.

She rapidly summarized two days of watching the lake into a brief information packed talk concluding with how she expected them to finish, "On what will be the last lap maybe 2 to 3 days from now...."

There was a universal sigh from all the team including Kid Red.

"Yes I am expecting this one to go three days." She said calmly. "There are a lot of good boards and crews this time, maybe the best ever as is being touted. With this we need to bear in mind that there are two registered teams with two to four boards each and probably two unofficial teams that will be working together. That is their strength and greatest weakness. We will move on best immediate decision. They have to wait instructions from the lead board or from shore and at times from both which is when it gets best for us. I expect to see the loss of at least one fourth to one third of the boards before sunset on day one. After that it is a matter of each crew member maximizing their performance, being constantly alert and always watching my signals."

"Now and as always, watch my left flipper and nothing below that. Nothing below that!!"

"Sometimes I will signal a move by using the right upper flipper. It will be pretty obvious because no signal will be coming from the left."

Now looking at the three mud turtles that would be doing keel work, "Mudders, I will be communicating with you solely through the board. I will be the only one tapping and we will review this after the meeting."

The mudders all nodded their understanding.

“Well that is about it. Any questions? No. Well Mudders come with me and the rest of you make Kid Red feel at home.”

## Chapter Four

Kid Red moved among the crew. A few asked his background and some were obviously concerned that he was a solo boarder. That he had been a good one did not matter. He could feel the thoughts. He was a team member but not yet a member of the team. Well he would find the moment and do the deed whenever it occurred that would assure victory. He was new to team boards, but he knew plenty about winning he thought.

The mudders were coming back now from their private session with Queen Lucy. They were joking among themselves and then all three saw him and they stopped. Two turned to join some of the other crewmembers slightly away from the bush, but one remained looking straight at him. Though less than a fourth the size of Red it looked him up and down just like Queen Lucy had.

“I’m Joe Mud, senior chief mudder for the board. Me and my little team will be holding you on the water and keeping you from spilling. You won’t even know we are there if everything goes right, but if you spill one of us will be under you as soon as you hit the water and pushing you up. Go with the ride and do not attempt to assist. As soon as you see the board, grab it and pull. One of us will be giving your rear side an additional push and you should be back on fine.”

“If the situation is too dicey and we cannot leave our post we will call out to you via low vibes with fast directions to regain the board.”

“Joe, it’s good to meet you and the mudder group. I will note one advantage of solo board; we learn to stay on pretty good. You are off; you are lost.” Kid Red noted with some obvious pride.

“You are one of us now and we have to take care of each other. If it happens remember what I said” responded Joe. Then he turned to join some of the other reds and yellows of the team.

A voice behind Joe said quietly, “It takes a while to be accepted, even when you are good, even when you are great.”

He turned. It was Queen Lucy. She looked much more relaxed than on the rock or at the beginning of her talk to the team. He had a faint smile now, “I think they have adopted me like a brother from the clutch except for the fact that your chief mudder thinks I will fall in the drink on the first wave.”

“And you won’t right? That’s what they all say. This crew - all of us are looking to win. It is never easy after you win one of these. They learn your methods, adapt them and it gets harder every year. Look at this ride as a crash course to your future in team boards. If we all work together we win. Concentrate, Concentrate, Concentrate...”

Kid Red butted in, “On what, the board, the competition, the environment, who hates who on this board?” He knew he was going too far. But he was surprised by her answer.

“Get it out. Get it all out before morning. The only thing you concentrate on this time is your crew position and my orders and signals. As much as possible it will be signals. You will be number three so it should be pretty straight forward.” She said.

Kid Red was genuinely surprised. Number three...He had expected Number nine or maybe Number seven. He did not know what to say other than, “Thanks.”

“Don’t thank me. Someone thinks you have great potential. My job is to make sure you learn and that we win this race.”

Now he knew what to say, “Thanks Captain. I’ll do my part.”

“If we all will we win.” She said and then turned and walked off into the night.

Kid followed the rest of the team to their sleeping area and found himself amazingly calm. In solo boarding he was always excited to the point of fidgeting until the race would start.

## Chapter Five

“Good morning fans and teams. This is Big Tom Boxer.”

“Annnnnnnnnnd Jimmy Slider.”

“Coming to you live and on vibe as the official commentators for this Champion Race” said Big Tom Boxer.

“As we look around the lake,” said Jimmy Slider. “We see the boards and crews are ready. The tether tower is ready and the fans are more than ready.”

A huge cheer broke out from among the audience around the lake. So many turtles were there that no ground or empty rock or log could be seen.

“At this time I direct all of you to look to the sunrise as our bird band and chorus will sing the Anthem. “ The band mainly of bluebirds and mocking birds started first and then the chorus of every song bird represented in this part of the country broke in and the turtles as well as the whole nearby woodland were overcome for a time with the joy of the sunrise, the new warmth of the sun and just living in nature.

This stopped as suddenly as it started.

“Big Tom, I get choked every time I hear that song and think of all of our ancestors.”

“Yes Jimmy and all their struggles and adventures so that we could live free.”

There was a pause and many turtles thought about the words, but the youngsters thought, "Let's get this race going."

They did not realize the philosophy of the Turtle was the whole reason for the race.

But now the master rigger was on top of the tether tower having been hoisted there by a tether pulley and removing himself from the tie. He was on a small round platform. He looked slowly around the whole circle then looked intently at all the tethers going to the boards. There were indeed thirty of them so the tether tower was the highest yet. The boards were spread out and the tethers attached to them in groups of ten. There was a lead group which technically would have more to go to win. There was a middle group in the middle. There was a rear group which technically had an advantage at the beginning of the race.

Now he raised a right flipper in the direction of the boards so all crews could see that all was rated as ready. A giant cheer came from the audience of turtles and some birds in addition to the band and chorus.

He then went to the edge of the platform and dived toward the water. We would call it about a five foot drop. He did repeated somersaults and stances as he flew through the air. A splash like a cannon ball came up when he hit the water intentionally on his back.

Every board captain watching said the same thing to their crew. "Stretch tether and start position." All crews let out some of the tether they had pulled onto their sterns so they could now maneuver. Even so it



was a very crowded and slow beginning. The fans and fan clubs were trying to out shout each other in their efforts to let their favorite board or team know they were there and they loved them. Down in the water on the boards the shouts were difficult to separate, but Kid Red gently reached over the number two and tapped Queen Lucy on the back.

“They are shouting Lucy, Lucy, Lucy from over there” he pointed. “And over there” he pointed in the opposite direction. Queen Lucy looked in both directions and waved a flipper.

“Thanks,” she said. “And now strictly to business,” she did not need to say more.

“Yes Captain,” returned Kid Red and assumed the all four stance looking forward.

The number two was ahead of him and all that he saw was the other turtle’s behind. Due to the small platform at the head of every board the Captain could lean or stand on it and be seen by all the crew. Queen Lucy was leaning on it and her upper flippers were easy to see.

And then the first signal which she also tapped to the mudders (at this time their leader and one of the new ones). Signal: we will bear to the right and get some lake room.

The mudders adjusted to the signal and the board began to turn, slowly of course. Then on the board crew all adjusted slightly so that if they hit something it would not lead to their spill.

There were a lot of different orders on the different boards and boards were turning in both directions to avoid currents or take advantage of them. The effect was the appearance of near total confusion. But it wasn't.

The master rigger now at the base of the tether tower and his crew monitored signals and requests to the tower so each board got what it wanted pulling in or letting out. Three boards seemed to be pointing towards her and one board was directly in front of her and doing a strange broadside maneuver. Kid Red heard a low voice of Queen Lucy talking to herself he thought, "Awfully early for one of these."

Her bearing course passed the would-be obstacle on its right and therefore the bow side. Captain to Captain looked at each other but said nothing. A moment later she was in the current she wanted and being pushed behind the other three boards, one of which rammed another accidentally as it tried to block her too. The crews of both spilled into the water. A signal from the tower noted both boards were out of the race and started pulling them toward the tower. The spilled crews started swimming toward the nearest referee station on shore.

Kid Red did his duties but thought what a cool, smart, dangerous captain she is.

Then he heard her talking to the whole crew, "Two down and twenty seven to go."

The crew cheered so Kid Red cheered.

## Chapter Six

The morning was beautiful, not a cloud in the sky, which meant it would warm up rapidly too, causing faster currents. Queen Lucy stayed close to shore in the early part and two more boards hit each other trying to maneuver from being too close to shore. They saw Queen Lucy but she was not the cause of the accident. Again the spilling was near total and the referees ruled it an unnecessary accident and disqualified both boards. Queen Lucy said nothing, but the crew including Kid Red thought, “twenty-five to go.”

Having started in the middle and with four boards gone there were still at least fifteen boards behind her. She could see that of the two registered teams both had been four boards each (one was down to the chief captain and one flanker on his left) and each group in their own formation. The other seven might be independent like her or have the other unofficial team hid in them. Three teams working together especially at the end would be a disaster.

“Might as well find out now,” she thought. She climbed on to the platform and signaled with the left flipper: Course to the left aim for the board with the big 10. Maximum slow.

Then she got back on the board and tapped to the mudders: bear left maximum slow. As they locked together to make a bigger slowing rudder and keel as all the deck turtles stretched to trail all four flippers into the water and facing flat against the course. The new slowing was amazingly quick and the boards she was closing with took immediate notice. The big 10 on her

target board signaled for the tower to take in tether and the captain of the board signaled action to the crew. They too flattened themselves and trailed their flippers.

At this moment Queen Lucy could see the current she was looking for and signaled: Maximum right, maximum brace. And she tapped the same to the mudders who corrected their position to favor the turn fast. They knew from her talk with them the night before that this kind of thing would be her method this year.

The two team boards were into the independents and could not rapidly change course. One of them was bumped mildly by an independent and the no 10 of the team board spilled. It would not take either board out of the race but it was bad for the team board. The current meanwhile allowed Queen Lucy to pass the independents, and the outer team. The lead team was still further behind and they tightened their formation.

“We will stay in this position for the rest of today unless there are any challengers.” She said and then, “Begin wet shell drill even numbers first.”

Half the team slid into the water one at a time and held on with a flipper.

One or two caught a floating insect and all of them drank until it was time to get back on so the other half including Queen Lucy could go.

The boards behind them and further behind after seeing the action were doing similar activities. It was noon and the heat felt fabulous as long as you could get

wet too. They were on the edge of the shore and the crowd was cheering them even those that favored other boards.

“Must be great to be a Legend,” thought Kid Red. As the number three it was his job to relay the orders. He could use the same signals or low volume voice. He was sticking to signals at present. “Do it when you don’t have to and it will be easy when you do.” He thought.

On the shore the substitutes including the big Halfling were watching and trying to guess what would happen next. So far they had guessed one of her moves but the others had consistently caught them by surprise. The mudder on the shore was anxious about the mudders under Queen Lucy’s board, but the others all reminded her that the senior chief mudder had been with the Luce (another name used for Queen Lucy) for many seasons.

“She spent five seasons herself as a number 10. She learned an awfully lot just by watching. And then the Yellow Wonder got hold of her.” The big Hafling said quietly.

As the noon sun started in a cooling direction there was activity among most of the boards, but Queen Lucy kept her team relaxed and even let a couple boards get behind her. They were surprised but took the position.

Queen Lucy thought to herself, “Now I have a team; they just don’t know it.”

She could see that the remaining known four board team’s chief captain had noticed and was watching her

every move while sitting on his platform. A captain from one of the boards she had just let past called to her, “Why are you doing this?”

“To give everybody a chance” she called back.

There was a cheer from all the boards she had let past and then from the shore as the story was repeated.

Up on the press platform Big Tom and Jimmy looked in amazement and then started their commentary.

“Well Big Tom, I have never seen anything like it. First she moves but doesn’t move. Then she outsmarts obvious and illegal blocking. Then she out guesses the currents...”

“Yes Jimmy, then she lets five boards get behind and now they have a good shot at the remaining group. “

“It doesn’t figure Big Tom. Any chance of getting a comment from Coach Yellow Wonder?”

“We talked to him earlier about the game plan for this race and he said they would be doing the stuff they do well and some unexpected moves” said Big Tom.

“And today’s special word is enigmatic,” said Jimmy Slider.

Back at the boards in the water the afternoon slid into dusk and then into evening. There was a good moon and it reflected off the water. Then a cloud covered the moon and Queen Lucy sprang to life.

Flipper Signal: Maximum slow. Aim for the left of the team boards.

Then she called out to the other independent boards as she passed through them, “Come on gang we are going in and we would love your company.”

There was a cheer from all of these boards and some got on her right and some behind, but she and they were rapidly slowing and the team group noted and prepared to separate.

The chief captain of the remaining team called out to Queen Lucy, “I don’t think there is a rule for this. What rules are you using?”

“Same as you,.....WIN.”

At this moment two of the independent boards had gotten their tethers tangled with the outer team board. They altered course together and the team boat was yanked and all but three of the crew spilled.

“Fall back toward that trunk,” she said and pointed for the independents to see. One independent had spilled due to the chief captain of the team boards finesse maneuver looking like he was going to ram them. No contact so no penalty. But there was nothing he could do about the rest and they could only be approached by losing his and his remaining team winning position.

As Queen Lucy’s board and the others reached the trunk she called out to the other boards, “Back to business, but was great working with you.”

She laid a course in front of the larger group of boards behind her but made no more effort to catch the team boards. Instead she ordered sleep drill and like the water drills half the crew rested while the other half kept watch.

Once in the early morning before the sun was up two boards were seen coming toward them from the group behind. But when they realized they had been noticed they veered away. Kid Red was noting to himself that this really was a team game on a board or in a formation. It lacked the constant excitement of the solo board. But so many more things could happen and so many ways to win or lose.

For one period he even had command of the board while Queen Lucy and the number two slept. He woke them both up as the first light of sunrise came into view.

“Good job,” said Queen Lucy as she checked the board’s position and the rest of the contestants. Some of the independents were near her on the left, but most were close to shore and drifting like her very slowly. She also noticed that the remaining team which was down to two somehow had gotten to three again.

“Must be from one of the unannounced teams,” she thought but said nothing.

The number two pointed it out and she said out loud, “I see it. I expected it.”

The number two looked quietly and felt reassured.



Before the day turned really hot she had gotten her crew through the water drills and announced the plan for the day. “We stay where we are unless challenged.”

“Boring,” thought Kid Red, but he said nothing. A floater insect came by and he grabbed and swallowed.

“You’re pretty fast. You better be!” She said.

He heard but had no idea what she meant. The number two seemed to know but said nothing. Meanwhile Queen Lucy tapped to the mudders below that she was sending for the mudder on shore and would substitute the younger mudder that had been on all day and night already. The mudder on shore seeing the signal repeated to her happily started toward the water to swim out. The other one could not leave the board till she arrived.

“Well, I’ll see you when you get there,” she said to the big Hafling as she passed him in the sand. He had seemed to be sleeping, but one eye popped open instantly.

“You will indeed.” He said.

## Chapter Seven

The two junior mudders took position together briefly so the mudder senior chief could go up on board and talk to Queen Lucy.

“You doing okay?” she asked as his head and then upper flippers came out of the water and he hung on to the side. He looked tired.

“I can trade them out every quarter if it will help, even go for a threesome legal if needed.”

“It’s not needed.” He said. “I am just a little winded from so much stuff so early.”

“Me too” she said. “But I’m just sitting on my rear parts.”

He smiled at the joke.

“No, really I am fine. And my girls are great. Tenacity and spirit, that’s what you need on the under team.”

Now Queen Lucy smiled, “Well no one knows what’s needed down there better than you, but I don’t want to lose anybody. Especially you...”

“I’ll see you in the shallows,” he said as he let go and went below. As soon as he started hooking on the under hull of the board the relieved mudder let go and started swimming to the surface to get her bearings and then headed to Yellow Wonder’s part of the beach where his teams and students were sitting. She would

report there and then go to where Queen Lucy's champion team had their official site.

"You ready," said the chief mudder looking back upside down at his crewmate.

"Born ready" she said calmly.

"Good girl!" He thought, "Cause the worst is yet to come."

On the board Queen Lucy looked at the sky for the possibility of rain or even a thunderstorm. There were occasional white clouds but nothing looking dangerous. She surveyed the coast line and the eddies set up by the various small currents. She looked especially at the champion curve and the underground spring site.

She kept her position while two of the independents proceeded toward the team boards looking like they meant to challenge and were already proving they could slow as good as the team boards. They moved towards the left and as soon as it was obvious which way they would pass the left board peeled out and went beyond them spilling tether as he passed and making a big circle around.

"Tremendous skill to pull that off," thought Queen Lucy.

And then he tightened the circle before the unsuspecting independents could see the plan. He snapped it shut under both boards. No spill. No foul. But the mudders were stripped off and two of them had obviously hurt flippers. Queen Lucy went livid. The two

boards ceased to have direction and the two team boards surged behind.

The two independent boards signaled for their replacement mudders and for aid teams. At least six aid teams from all over the shore were splashing into the water and swimming fast to the site. The boards locked together with half of each crew holding to the opposite board and the other half getting their injured out of the water and on the boards. Blood in the water could bring snakes or gators though this lake was supposed to be free of all of them. The aid teams arrived and put the two injured on their backs with flippers up and the aid teams under their shells to keep their heads and flippers out of the water.

“We’ll have you in the cold stream in no time” said the chief aid turtle.

“I need to stay,” said one of the mudders. “My replacement has no racing experience, just training.”

“They’ll do fine.” Said the chief aid turtle as all the aid turtles started swimming toward the cold stream.

“Besides, you got a chief mudder - Right?”

The wounded mudder nodded yes from upside down. Her right front flipper was gashed and it looked pretty bad. Looking at it the aide turtle on the other side looked sadly.

But the chief aide turtle continued, “then stop worrying. He or she knows what to do. Someday you’ll be a chief mudder.”

She smiled faintly.

Queen Lucy was boiling, but her voice was calm, “Okay team, we now know what we are up against. And I pity them.” Then she stopped. A voice inside was saying, “Concentrate, concentrate, concentrate.”

It was an old memory of the Yellow Wonder, the same that she had only recently said to Kid Red.

“We’re going to win this race and set a new record. That is the best gift we can give those wounded brave mudders and we are going to.”

The crew cheered.

## Chapter Eight

Queen Lucy passed through the independents easily. They just waved and cheered her and her board on. She came toward the remaining team boards, but as she neared one of the flankers started peeling off to block her. She immediately altered course putting the board rapidly out of range for mischief. She did this three times and on the third time the other flanker peeled off too. Just as with the single flanker she turned soon enough to avoid the effort to block or spill her board.

She turned her head to the number two and said, "When we do this as the real thing we will take on and take out the right flanker. Pass it to the crew." This went verbally and soft from turtle to turtle til the number ten was reached. He waved a flipper that he had got it.

Queen Lucy then took the board back to and through the independents; they were down to only four boards themselves. One captain spoke out as she passed, "We'll let you know if they start doing something strange."

"Thanks" said Queen Lucy. "But watch out yourselves. I think they will try to hit you at first dark."

As soon as she was a safe distance from the independents she ordered, "Maximum speed and bear right towards the shore." She said it. Signaled it with the left flipper and tapped it on the deck for the mudders to hear.

The remainder of the day was hot until sunset but no actions were taken toward the independents or Queen Lucy's board. Her crew watched as some of the way in front boards (not in back so not slow contenders) did some positioning of their own. No boards spilled but at the end of it there were two new boards to watch which might make a move on her.

With the moon at the top of its arc there was some movement of the three team boards together and then they were moving forwards, losing position to take on the independents. They were not successful in reaching the independents unnoticed. Instead the independents sprang to life and each took a different tact to separate from the rest.

At the same time Queen Lucy was moving in from the right and going behind and thereby ahead of the team. Her number 10 was letting out tether all the way and about two of our feet behind her board the crew had fashioned a large ring in the tether and which if they veered left would stand up and if they went right would go flat. The chief captain of the team boat had seen Lucy heading out but did not see her as a threat on the course she was on. He would catch her board later and would knock out the independents for now.

In a slow but steady move the team boards broke their triangle formation and each picked a target. The team captain's board headed toward one independent like he was going to ram, but instead suddenly turned, slapping the other board's bow hard, hard enough to spill the captain and the number 2 of the board. This caused confusion and poor steering during which the right flanker board rammed the independent right in the

middle. All but the number 10 were thrown in the water.

Down below the mudders of this board managed to keep it from flipping.

The crew started to climb back on. The team board right flank captain was looking for the next target when Queen Lucy came at maximum speed, crossed his bow and banked left briefly to bring the ring up. The team board did not have time to veer away and so the bow was encircled as the board continued forward. The Luce ordered maximum fast again the ring tightened. The Luce ordered sudden bear right and now the tight tied tether started to pull the bow of the board underwater. It only went a little but it jumped out of the water and almost keeled over to the right.

This spilled everyone except the captain of the board who looked squarely at Queen Lucy and dived into the water.

It was not a spill so no penalty. Seeing this the chief captain of the team boards, now down to two, turned away and sought to get back to their rearmost position.

The remaining independents were out of energy and let them by. They cheered Queen Lucy as she passed behind them.

“I think this race is down to them and us.” She said to the crew and there was some laughing by some of them. “Pass the word,” she said to the number 2 “we will take them out at sunrise and then dangle behind



them till they are exhausted. I would like to win around midday.”

He nodded and as she tapped the message to the mudders. He gave the same to Kid Red. “Wow, how many more tricks does she have and can we stay strong enough,” he thought.

Yet the whole crew got rest, wet time, and some insect breakfast before the sunlight started showing on the edge of the embankment in the east.

Queen Lucy made a signal: all crew maximum slow and maximum brace we bare right and will pass and distance them from as close to the shoreline as we can.

At the same time she tapped it to the mudders along with a request for them to tap any impending shallows or obstacles. The two team boats were deeper in an effort to have smaller turns and greater control. Now they slacked some tether.

She let them get even and then behind her board, but only as much as she wanted too. They could see that as she went even with them three more times before letting them drop back some and stay there.

“We will take the rear at midmorning,” Queen Lucy said via silent flipper language. “And we will keep it till the race is called or they drop out.”

The crew cheered. And Kid Red cheered as loud and lustily as the rest.

The morning passed uneventfully. The crew wondered why Queen Lucy had not done the early morning encounter. But they said nothing and she said nothing. She had been watching as both remaining team boards had been taking on a lot of tether. This had given her an idea or maybe she had been waiting for this the whole race.

The two team boards were going across her probable course perpendicular to it and they were two board lengths apart from each other. The chief captain of the combined teams was down to two boards and this was the last serious effort he could make to assure a victory.

Queen Lucy stood on the platform and signaled with her left flipper: Signal maximum speed forward which would take her away from the advancing lines that were now going taunt as the two team boards took in tether and then paddled to keep their boards parallel to each other but attempting not to move.

Signal: one quarter turn left, Order substitute; Number three off now.

“What?” Said Kid Red and quite loudly though unintentionally. “I’ve given everything I’ve got to help get us where we are.”

And then he saw the substitute standing on the shore ready to get in but waiting.

Then Red heard the real voice of Queen Lucy. “Kid you want to save the day. Well you have very short time to jump and save it. Or sit on your rear mopping and we lose.”

He did not hear the last part because he was in the air doing a somersault before hitting the water. He had seen the two tethers heading toward them. He had seen that the substitute was the big Halfling. He had realized that was the only way the crew could do it.

Queen Lucy sat down on her platform with a quiet smile.

The big Halfling was moving through the water like a fast battleship though he would not have known it. In the old days the sub and the leaving crew had to slap flippers at some midpoint to make a substitution accepted, but that rule had been dropped many seasons ago. In spite of this as they passed close their left flippers came out of the water and the slap noise was so loud the entire audience heard it and CHEERED!!

Both turtles put on a last burst of speed after the slap. Kid Red going to shore thought “What a lousy way to save the day.”

Then he laughed. He knew what was about to happen.

As he crawled out of the water the Big Halfling pulled himself onto the board at the number three spot. He lay perpendicular to the board with his head and front flippers pointed outward away from the approaching taunt tether lines. Then as if by accident he rolled over and angled so he was perpendicular to the board again but now extended over the water. The number two was not as long or tall as Queen Lucy but he was muscular and very strong himself.

Number four was a stocky red female and she just grinned.

The substitute big Halfling looked at her worried, "Just do the job. Just do the job."

She laughed and said, "We shall do so."

Queen Lucy got up on the platform and signaled. Left flipper: Signal: Brace for impact. There will be two. The crew braced except for no 2 and no 4. They faced the Halfling and wrapped their front flippers around his extended rear ones. Most of the crew had seen the approaching tight tethers by now and could guess what could happen,

Down below the new mudder spoke out as the orders were tapping down,"Permission from the senior chief mudder that I may go forward. I may be able to cut some of each tether as we cross."

"You got it sister and good luck." He said as he moved to the side for her to pass and then got behind her. She was one of those rare mudders who had inherited the sharp row of shell teeth on the upper middle portion of her shell.

"Even a gator would think twice before chopping down on such a creature. And to make it an offensive weapon. What a female," thought the senior chief mudder.

Up top the first tether cord was fast approaching. Suddenly the big Halfling stretched out, grabbed the cord in both flippers and got up on his hind flippers to

full height with number 2 and number 4 bracing his lower flippers and him lifting the cord over his head and flipping it into the water on the other side.

And he was back down almost instantly grabbing the second one and doing it again.

As it hit the water and the two team boards found themselves surging in the wrong direction Queen Lucy altered course to drive over both tethers. The whole crew felt the jerk when the first tether split under them. Although the team captain had instructed his number 10 to pull, hoping to get another shot at capsizing the Luce, it was not to be. The second one being more taunt cracked in both directions and the part toward the Team captain's board hit and spilled the no 10 ,8, and 7. No contact no foul.

Queen Lucy's board took the last position and stretched it even more so there could be no additional challenges by anyone. But nobody wanted to. Every board still floating except the two team boards was cheering wildly as was everyone on the shore.

The females of the crew all stood up and did their rendition of "Bad Boys" with their tails twitching and their first claw in a scolding position of their right upper flippers. The board continued to get further and further behind from the remaining floating boards until the chief tether tech once more looked out in a full circle verifying that all boards but one had crossed the finish line. He took off his ceremonial work hat and threw it in the direction of Queen Lucy.

Then he again dove from the tower platform and his upside down cannon ball again made a great splash that all there could see. That ended the race.

Queen Lucy turned her board now under full flipper power and moving in a stately manner as all the crew did perfectly synchronized flipper strokes.

Then they broke into the song themselves:

“Turtle Boarding, here we go  
Turtle Boarding, going really slow;  
Onk Achymon,  
Oka, Oka, Oka

Turtle Board about to Spill  
Smallboy there better be the keel  
Onk Achymon,  
Oka, Oka, Oka

QUEEN LUCY is STILL A THRILL!  
SHE don't get wet AND SHE NEVER SPILL”

And Mother turtles looked at younger ones and asked,  
“Now do you understand?”

And some said, “YES.”

The End

## Glossary

- Boxer** a box turtle (actually a tortoise)
- Captain** the leader and number one of a team board
- Crew** the nine turtles with assigned positions on a team board
- Greens** green turtles
- Halfings** red and yellow joined together
- Judges** turtles on the Regional Rules Committee who develop and update the rules of the races and also judge the races with the power to disqualify or approve a board, crew or captain
- Reds** red turtles
- Refs** referee turtles of all types monitoring all boards in the race from the immediate shore, with the power to call fouls and disqualify boards who do not follow the rules
- Regional Rules Committee** the turtle committee made of judges who define the regulations of the sport – they also judge during the race and can disqualify a team board or registered team
- Riggers** turtles who set up the tether tower, distribute tethers to the individual boards, and work with the tether tower to deliver or pull in tether to aid a turtle board to maneuver

**Registered Team** a group of team boards officially working together to improve the chance of one winning

**Slider** red ear and yellow belly turtles are slid

**Solo Board** a one turtle board

**Spill** to fall off a turtle board involuntarily

**Team Board** a turtle board carrying a crew of nine and a captain, numbered from one to ten

**Underwater Team** the mudders hanging onto the underside of the team turtle board and with their bodies forming the keel and rudder of the board

**Unnecessary Accident** anything with board contact resulting in spills or capsizing a turtle board

**Unregistered Team** a group of team boards working together unofficially to improve the chance of one winning