

Source: Aesop's Fables, retold by S. Vernon-Jones (1912)

The Tortoise and the Hare

One of Aesop's Fables

Illustrated by Arthur Rackham



Once upon a time there was a hare who, boasting how he could run faster than anyone else, was forever teasing tortoise for its slowness. Then one day, the irate tortoise answered back: "Who do you think you are? There's no denying you're swift, but even you can be beaten!" The hare squealed with laughter.

"Beaten in a race? By whom? Not you, surely! I bet there's nobody in the world that can win against me, I'm so speedy. Now, why don't you try?"

Annoyed by such bragging, the tortoise accepted the challenge. A course was planned, and the next day at dawn they stood at the starting line. The hare yawned sleepily as the meek tortoise trudged slowly off. When the hare saw how painfully slow his rival was, he decided, half asleep on his feet, to have a quick nap. "Take your time!" he said. "I'll have forty winks and catch up with you in a minute."

The hare woke with a start from a fitful sleep and gazed round, looking for the tortoise. But the creature was only a short distance away, having barely covered a third of the course. Breathing a sigh of relief, the hare decided he might as well have breakfast too, and off he went to munch some cabbages he had noticed in a nearby field. But the heavy meal and the hot sun made his eyelids droop. With a

careless glance at the tortoise, now halfway along the course, he decided to have another snooze before flashing past the winning post. And smiling at the thought of the look on the tortoise's face when it saw the hare speed by, he fell fast asleep and was soon snoring happily. The sun started to sink, below the horizon, and the tortoise, who had been plodding towards the winning post since morning, was scarcely a yard from the finish. At that very point, the hare woke with a jolt. He could see the tortoise a speck in the distance and away he dashed. He leapt and bounded at a great rate, his tongue lolling, and gasping for breath. Just a little more and he'd be first at the finish. But the hare's last leap was just too late, for the tortoise had beaten him to the winning post. Poor hare! Tired and in disgrace, he slumped down beside the tortoise who was silently smiling at him.

"Slowly does it every time!" he said.

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Tortoise and the Hare work:

Core Events:

Hare believes that he is the fastest animal on earth and won't shut up about it.

Tortoise vows to prove Hare wrong

A race is set

Tortoise sets out

Hare naps

Hare wakes, sees Tortoise not very far, goes to breakfast

Hare gets sleepy after breakfast, dozes.

Hare wakes, Tortoise almost to finish, runs to catch up, loses.

Tortoise gloats over victory.

Tortoise as Protagonist

Hare believes that he is the fastest animal on earth and won't shut up about it. Tortoise vows to prove Hare wrong

A race is set

Tortoise sets out – acts even slower than he really is

Deer, a friend of Tortoise, says to Hare: Wow, I shouldn't have bet on my friend Tortoise. I'm going to be out of money. Hare says, you're right. He's so slow I'm going to take a nap. I should have set the time later in the day.

As Hare naps, Porcupine lays out a couple of really attractive cabbages in Hare's eyesight, then fills them with Nyquil. He give Tortoise a thumbs up, Tortoise winks.

Hare wakes, sees Tortoise not very far. Porcupine says, Wow. He's sooo slow. I'm going to get a bite. Hare sees cabbages and says, Me, too.

Porcupine shuffles past Tortoise and winks.

Hare finishes cabbage, starts to get sleepy. A Goose settles down near Hare and says. I'm bushed, care to join me? Hare does. The two animals nap. Goose winks at Tortoise.

Hare wakes, Tortoise almost to finish, runs to catch up, loses.

Tortoise, hoisted on the backs of the Porcupine, Deer and Goose, gloats over victory.

HARE as Protagonist

Hare hopes that he is the fastest animal on earth and won't shut up about how no one can beat him.

Tortoise wants to give Hare a reality check and vows to prove Hare wrong

A race is set

Tortoise sets out – and Hare can't believe that Tortoise is so slow and, because he is tired from the night before, takes a nap because he knows he can't lose.

Hare wakes, sees Tortoise is not very far, and decides to go to breakfast, telling the spectators that he can't lose.

After breakfast, Hare looks and sees that Tortoise is only a third of the way along, gets sleepy from his big meal and dozes again.

When Hare wakes after a longer nap, he sees that Tortoise almost to finish. Hare runs to catch up, but can't and loses.

Tortoise gloats over victory. Hare bows his head in shame and walks away.