

The Tortoise and the Hare

One spring day, Hare was hopping through a field. Duck, Cow, Pig, and Tortoise were enjoying the sun together.

"You know," said Hare, "I have never been beaten in a race. Not once has anyone—or anything—run faster than me. Would any of you like to challenge me?"

The other animals looked at each other, none of them eager to lose a race to Hare, for Hare would never stop bragging about it. At last, Tortoise said, "I will race you, Hare. I accept your challenge."

"You are too funny, Tortoise," said Hare. "I could pass the finish line five times before you even *start* the race. Seriously, you'll be eating my dust!"

"I'll ask you to keep your bragging to yourself until the race is done," said Tortoise.

"It won't be long then. Shall we race?" asked Hare. Tortoise just nodded his head—slowly. The other animals decided on a course.

"Okay, line up," said Pig. "On your mark, get set, go!" Hare was halfway down the dusty lane before Tortoise even had his legs over the

starting line.

"Slow and steady," said Tortoise. "Slow and steady."

By this time, Hare was almost to the bridge. He looked back to see if he could spot Tortoise. He wasn't sure if it was Tortoise, but there was a green and brown lump moving toward him very slowly.

"My goodness," thought Hare, "I could take a nap and still win this race. Wait! I *could* take a nap and win." Hare curled up on the ground and, laughing to himself, fell asleep. As Tortoise inched his way forward, Hare dreamed of running past the finish line, shaking hands with the other animals, and eating carrots. As he woke from his dream, Hare rubbed his eyes and saw Tortoise—crossing the finish line.

"No!" shouted Hare. "I'm faster!"

"Slow and steady wins the race, Hare," said Tortoise with a smile. "Slow and steady."

