

Let's Make a Story

The Hare and the Tortoise

Adapted by Rob John

Hello. I'm going to tell you the story of something that happened to me not so long ago. It's quiet surprising really because I am a tortoise and normally not very much happens if you're a tortoise. We tortoises like standing still, eating green things and sleeping. But one day something a little bit special happened and it was all because of a hare.

I don't mean hair like you have on your head, I mean 'hare' as in animal. Have you ever seen a hare? They are like rabbits but they have longer ears and longer legs and they are very, very fast runners. The hare I'm going to tell you about was the fastest of them all and he was so proud of his running he couldn't stop showing off.

'Look at me!' he said one day. 'Look how fast I am, watch.'

The hare was a very fast runner. Have a think about what people look like when they're running very fast. Then make a still picture as if someone has taken a photo of you while you were running. What will your arms and legs be doing? What happens to people's faces when they try to run as fast as they can?

When you've made your still picture of you running, you can try making a picture of the hare running. Remember he has four long legs and big ears.

Sit down and I will carry on with my story.

All the animals agreed that yes the hare was very fast indeed. The trouble was the hare made us watch him run every day and soon we were a bit fed up of him.

'See,' shouted hare, 'did you all see that? I'm not even out of breath.'

'Yes, yes you really are very fast,' said fox weary.

'Fastest thing I've ever seen really, truly,' said badger yawning.

'I am the fastest animal in the whole world – who wants a race? Anybody think they can beat me in a race?'

None of the animals spoke.

'See' said hare, 'not one of you could beat me in a race. You're all too scared to even try!'

Suddenly without thinking about it I shouted out, 'I'll have ago. I'll give you a race if you want.'

Hare laughed. 'You? You're the slowest creature in the whole world! Tortoises take all day to just cross the road! Tortoises never get anywhere they are so slow! I'm not wasting my time racing a tortoise.'

That made me a bit cross so I said, 'What's the matter? Scared I might beat you?'





Some of the animals started laughing. He didn't like that so he said, 'Alright then tortoise. Let's have a race! Let's have a race right now...and then we shall see who's laughing.'

I didn't want to race the hare right now. Actually I didn't want to race him at all. I only said I would because I was so fed up of him showing off. We tortoises are not built for speed. Tortoises are slow, very slow.

'Mmn, not today. We'll have the race next week. I'll have to do a bit of training first.'

The next morning all the animals got up early to watch me do my training. First I did some gentle stretching exercises to warm myself up and then I started to run very very slowly. 'Has he started running yet?', said the fox.

'Hard to tell with tortoises,' said badger. 'Yes I think he's moving...yes...he's definitely moving.'

When I was doing my training I moved so slowly the other animals didn't know if I was moving at all. In a moment pretend that you are me doing my training. Work by yourself in your own space and do some warm-up stretching and then running, putting one foot in front of the other very, very slowly. With the music move in slow motion as a tortoise, like me.

And stop...sit where you are. Well after a while I had to stop - I was a bit out of puff. The animals watched me do my training every morning but they could see it wasn't working. I was slow and however hard I tried I couldn't get any quicker.

'You're going to get beaten', said fox.

'Sadly beaten.'

'Poor old tortoise', said badger.

On the day before the race hare came to see me do my last training session. 'Oh look at that,' he sneered, 'look at the tortoise racing! Have you ever seen anything slower than that? Is he actually moving at all? A lump of stone would give me a better race than that.'

Hare laughed so loudly at his own joke that he hadn't noticed that the other animals weren't laughing. They all felt a bit sad that I was going to lose the race the next day.

All sorts of animals were watching me train. There were birds up in the trees, fox and badger, little mice peeping out of the grass...even a couple of snakes.

Imagine you are one of those animals. Make a still shape like the animal you're going to be...one I've just told you about or another kind you may have been watching. How do you feel about the hare and me the tortoise? You might think that hare is a show-off or that I'm just silly to have challenged him to the race or something else. Be ready to share your thought out loud if you're asked.

Find a partner now and sit down in a space together.

On the day of the race crowds of animals turned up to watch. I made my way to the starting line very slowly and everyone waited for hare.



I was feeling nervous. Suddenly there was a loud whooshing sound and hare tore into view at top speed. He was wearing a brand new tracksuit and four of the most expensive trainers that money could buy.

'Right,' said fox. 'The race starts here.' He pointed to a line he had drawn on the ground. 'And ends at the tree at the other side of the field. The first one to touch the tree is the winner.'

I looked at the tree on the other side of the field: it looked a long way away.

'It's going to take me all day to get across that field!' I thought. 'I might as well give up now.' But then I thought, 'No - I won't give up. None of the other animals are brave enough to race hare. At least I'm having a go!'

Fox said, 'Ready, steady, go!' and the race began.

Before the animals could blink hare was half way across the field. He stopped and looked back. I'd only just crossed the starting line. Hare decided to have some fun - he ran back.

'Didn't you hear the fox say go? You can start now, you know!'

'I have started,' I said.

'Have you?' laughed Hare. 'I don't think so. I don't think you're moving at all!'

But I was moving. I was moving very very slowly.

'Look you're moving so slowly I'm going to lie down in the sun and have a little sleep and then I will wake up and still finish the race way ahead of you!'

Hare lay down and closed his eyes and straight away he was fast asleep.

Me, I kept going on and on all day. I kept going on and steadily I moved across the field. By lunchtime, when the sun was high in the sky, I was half way across the field and by evening when it started to get darker, I was getting close to the finishing tree.

Still hare slept on and now the other animals started to get excited...they started talking to each about what they were seeing. They didn't really like hare very much because he was always showing off, in fact they all wanted to see him get beaten. So they talked in whispers because they didn't want to wake him up.

Imagine you are one of those animals again. In a moment talk to your partner about the race. What do you think is going to happen? Will hare wake up and start running? Can I, the slow old tortoise, really win? Perhaps after the whole group can listen to some of your conversations? But remember you're going to have to talk in whispers because you don't want to wake up hare! Ready to start?

Hare was still asleep and the finishing tree was still getting closer all the time. The animals were very excited and some of them started to cheer!

'Come on, tortoise!' they shouted. 'Nearly there! Keep going, old friend! Keep going!'



But the noise of the cheering crowd woke up hare. He looked across the field and saw me about to reach the tree and in a flash he was running, running faster than he had ever run in his life. I could hear Hare thundering up behind me but I didn't look back and suddenly I was there. Just a second before hare arrived I touched the trunk of the tree with my nose and I had done it! An old tortoise had beaten a hare!

'It's not fair!' said hare. 'I was asleep! We have to run the race again! It's not fair!'

But no one was listening to the hare. In fact no one really listened to him ever again.

Imagine you are one of the animals again, cheering me on. You're going to make a whole class picture of those animals just as I reach the finishing tree.

First of all, with your partner, practice a really clear cheering gesture. Think about what we do when we're cheering because something very exciting has happened. What happens to our arms and hands and faces?

When you've practiced, the whole group can come together and line up side by side ready to make your actions again. Maybe someone could be chosen to play hare and someone tortoise as I win the race. Here's some cheering to help you get started.

Good bye!