

The Tortoise and the Hare

Characters:

Tortoise – Zoe

Hare – Julia

Mole – Vivienne

Tortoise's Mother – Lila

Butterfly – Riley

Lark – Elsie

Beaver – Sydney

Owl – Paris

Frog – Lucy

Otter – Isla

Porcupine – Maisy

Skunk – Caleb

Chipmunk – Susannah

Squirrel – Zoya

Ladybug – Alice

Bumblebee – Josie

Duck - Olivia

OWL (NARRATOR): Our story begins not too long ago, in a forest not too far from here.

PORCUPINE (*enters*): Good morning, owl!

OWL: Good morning, porcupine! How are you today?

PORCUPINE: Hungry! I'm going to get myself some breakfast. You're up awfully late, aren't you?

OWL: Yes, I'm going to get some sleep, I've had a long night. Enjoy the day!

[*OWL exits as FROG and OTTER enter*]

OTTER: Good morning, porcupine!

PORCUPINE: Good morning, raccoon!

FROG: Have you heard the news?

PORCUPINE: No, what news is that?

OTTER: Someone new is moving into the neighborhood!

PORCUPINE: Really?

FROG: Yes, we're here to welcome them.

[*BUTTERFLY, LARK, SKUNK enter*]

BUTTERFLY: Good morning, everyone!

OTTER: Good morning, Butterfly! Good morning, Lark!

FROG: Good morning, Skunk!

SKUNK: Good morning! Have you heard the news? We're getting new neighbors!

OTTER: Have you met them yet?

LARK: Not yet. We were going to welcome them. Why don't you come with us?

PORCUPINE: Sounds good!

[All exit except for SKUNK]

SKUNK (NARRATOR): Also in the forest lived a Hare and her best friend, Mole. *[calls to the animals who have exited]* Hey, wait for me! *[He exits]*

[HARE and MOLE enter]

HARE: Gosh, it's a beautiful summer's day, isn't it, Mole? Look at how the sun is shining!

MOLE *[squinting]*: Shining a little *too* brightly if you ask me. I can barely see anything.

HARE: And listen to those birds singing!

MOLE: Too much chattering and noise for my taste.

HARE: Oh, Mole--not even your complaints can bring me down today.

[Sings:]

On a wonderful day like today,
I defy any cloud to appear in the sky.
Dare any raindrop to plop in my eye
On a wonderful day like today.

On a wonderful morning like this
When the sun is as big as a yellow balloon
Even the sparrows are singing in tune
On a wonderful morning like this.

MOLE: Well, of course *you're* in a good mood. You're the fastest creature in the whole forest.

HARE *[proudly]*: That's very true. I can outrun anyone who tries to eat me, even the fox.

MOLE *[looking around, terrified]*: Fox! Where?

[CHIPMUNK, SQUIRREL, LADYBUG, BUMBLEBEE and DUCK enter]

HARE: Good morning, everyone!

MOLE: Where are you all off to?

SQUIRREL: We're going to meet the new arrivals!

DUCK: A new family has moved into the neighborhood.

MOLE: Really?

CHIPMUNK: Yes!

BUMBLEBEE: You should come with us!

LADYBUG: Yes, come with us!

HARE: Okay, let's go!

[They all exit]

BEAVER (NARRATOR): Nearby the new neighbors, a tortoise and her mother, were enjoying their first morning in their new home.

[TORTOISE enters slowly]

TORTOISE *[sings]*:

I'm bidin' my time; 'cause that's the kinda gal I'm.
While other folks grow dizzy
I keep busy bidin' my time.

I'm bidin' my time; 'cause that's the kinda gal I'm.
Beginnin' on a Monday, right through Sunday,
Bidin' my time.

[TORTOISE'S MOTHER enters]

MOTHER: Don't run off so fast! You forgot your scarf and I don't want you to catch cold.

TORTOISE: But ma, I want to check out our new neighborhood! And besides, it's a beautiful day out.

MOTHER: It could rain.

TORTOISE: There's not a cloud in the sky!

MOTHER: Oh, my dear, you're so young and inexperienced.

TORTOISE: Ma, I'm almost 60 years old.

MOTHER: Exactly, you're just a baby!

[*TORTOISE sighs and puts on the scarf. MOTHER exits.*]

BEAVER (NARRATOR): The tortoise strolled slowly through the forest, until he met with a beaver. [*As BEAVER*] Hello, there! You must be our new neighbor!

TORTOISE: That's right, I'm tortoise! I just moved in here with my mom.

BEAVER: I'm Beaver, nice to meet you!

TORTOISE: Do you live here with your family?

BEAVER: Actually, no. I live by myself.

TORTOISE: That must get a little lonely.

BEAVER: It does, sometimes.

[*BEAVER'S DANCE*]

TORTOISE: I'm sorry.

BEAVER: It's okay. I miss my family, but I have lots of friends here in the forest. [*LOOKS off stage*] In fact, here come some of them now!

[*HARE and MOLE enter*]

HARE: Well, hello there, Beaver!

BEAVER: Good morning, Hare! Good morning, Mole!

MOLE: Who's your friend?

HARE: Haven't seen you around before. Are you the new neighbor I've heard so much about?

TORTOISE: That's right.

MOLE: What *are* you, exactly?

TORTOISE: I'm a tortoise.

HARE: A tortoise, huh? Want to play with us?

TORTOISE: Sure!

HARE: Okay – tag, you're it!

[HARE “tags” TORTOISE. HARE, BEAVER, and MOLE run around while TORTOISE very slowly tries to catch them. But he can't. This could be a musical sequence]

OWL (NARRATOR): But no matter how hard he tried, the tortoise simply couldn't catch any one of them.

MOLE: Hey, you're supposed to try and catch us!

HARE: Yeah, you're going to have move a lot faster than that.

TORTOISE: But I'm going as fast as I can.

BEAVER: Wait a minute – that's as fast as you can run?

TORTOISE: That's right.

[HARE and MOLE look at each other and laugh]

HARE: That's hilarious!

MOLE: Ridiculous, even!

TORTOISE: Why is it ridiculous?

HARE: Because you'll be gobbled up in no time! What if you were being chased by a fox?

MOLE *[looking around, terrified]*: Fox! Where?

TORTOISE: If I were being chased by a fox, I'd pull myself into my shell, like this.

[TORTOISE demonstrates. HARE and MOLE look at each other and laugh again.]

HARE: You've got to be kidding me!

TORTOISE: What's so funny?

BEAVER: Yeah, what's so funny?

HARE: That's the dumbest thing I've ever seen.

MOLE: Even I'm smart enough to go underground if a fox is chasing me.

TORTOISE: I'm very smart! I'm smarter than either one of you!

HARE [*laughing*]: Of course you are!

TORTOISE: I am! And not only am I smarter than you, I'm faster too! In fact, I bet that I could beat you in a race!

[*BEAVER, HARE and MOLE look at TORTOISE*]

HARE: You think you could beat *me*? In a *race*?

TORTOISE [*uncertain*]: That's... that's right.

MOLE: Are you insane?

TORTOISE: What's the matter? Afraid of a little competition?

HARE: All right, since you've asked for it, meet me tomorrow morning at the boulder between the three large oak trees and we'll settle this nonsense there. See you then, Speedy!

[*HARE and MOLE exit, laughing*]

TORTOISE [*to BEAVER*]: Oh no, what have I done?

BEAVER: You've gotten yourself into quite a mess, I'm afraid. [*BEAVER exits*]

PORCUPINE (NARRATOR): Scared and unsure of himself, the tortoise headed home.

[*MOTHER enters*]

MOTHER: Welcome back! Did you make some new friends? [*TORTOISE sighs*] What's the matter, dear? You look like you have something on your mind.

TORTOISE: Oh ma, I think I've made a big mistake.

MOTHER: Why? What happened?

TORTOISE: The hare was making fun of me because I can't run fast, so I got angry and challenged him to a race. But I don't think I can win.

MOTHER: Goodness, that is a tough situation. I don't know if there's a faster animal in the forest than the hare.

TORTOISE: See? I'm doomed.

MOTHER: Now wait a minute, let me tell you something. [*She sings:*]

You have the cool clear eyes
Of a seeker of wisdom and truth,
Yet there's that upturned chin
And the grin of impetuous youth.
Oh I believe in you, I believe in you.

I hear the sound of good solid judgment
Whenever you talk.
Yet there's the bold, brave spring
Of the tiger that quickens your walk.
Oh I believe in you, I believe in you.

[They hug]

TORTOISE: Thanks, ma.

LARK (NARRATOR): The next morning, everyone met at the boulder between the three large oak trees.

[LADYBUG, CHIPMUNK, SQUIRREL, BUMBLEBEE and DUCK enter]

LADYBUG: I'm so excited!

CHIPMUNK: Me too!

SQUIRREL: Who do you think will win?

BUMBLEBEE: Nobody's faster than Hare!

DUCK: Yes, I'm sure Hare will win.

[FROG, OTTER, PORCUPINE, SKUNK, and BEAVER enter]

FROG: It's a big day today!

OTTER: I can't wait for the race to start!

PORCUPINE: Hare's going to beat that tortoise by a mile.

SKUNK: That's for sure!

BEAVER: I don't know, I think the tortoise has a chance to win.

[The others look at BEAVER and laugh. OWL, LARK, and BUTTERFLY enter.]

LARK: Hello, Owl! We didn't expect to see you here.

BUTTERFLY: Shouldn't you be sleeping right now?

OWL [*Yawns*]: Yes, but I wouldn't want to miss this race for anything!

[EVERYONE else enters. The animals cheer for HARE, who greets her adoring fans]

MOLE: All right, quiet everybody, quiet! [*All are silent*] Now, the racers will start here at the boulder. When I say go, you'll run up the path along the brook, circle around the pond, cross through the meadow, pass by the raspberry patch, and end back here. First one back is the winner. Understand? [*ALL nod*] All right. Racers: on your mark, get set...

MOTHER [*To TORTOISE*]: Remember, I believe in you!

MOLE: Go!

[And they're off! The HARE and TORTOISE act out what the narrator describes. This can all be underscored with music.]

OWL (NARRATOR): In an instant, the hare was running up the path along the brook and was soon out of sight. As for the tortoise....

MOLE: I said, "go!"

TORTOISE: I *am* going!

BUTTERFLY (NARRATOR): He plodded along slowly, although by this point the hare had already circled around the pond and was crossing through the meadow.

HARE [*stops to look behind*]: Look at that fool tortoise! All the way back near the start while I'm almost halfway done. I knew this would be a piece of cake.

PORCUPINE (NARRATOR): The hare continued through the meadow and came to the raspberry patch.

HARE: Almost there! Here's the raspberry patch. [*thinks*] I'm so far ahead of the tortoise, I don't think there would be any harm in enjoying a snack before I go on.

SKUNK (NARRATOR): The hare filled his belly with the ripe, juicy raspberries. Soon, after he felt he could eat no more....

HARE: Alright, time to finish! [*holds his stomach*] Uh-oh, I don't feel so great. I may have eaten too much. [*looks behind for the TORTOISE*] That slowpoke is still so far away, I could easily take a little rest and let my food digest before I continue.

OTTER (NARRATOR): The hare tucked herself under a tree and closed her eyes. As a lark sang in the tree and a butterfly flew among the flowers, the hare was soon fast asleep.

LARK [*sings as BUTTERFLY dances*]:

It's a lazy afternoon
And the beetlebugs are zoomin'
And the tulip trees are bloomin'
And there's not another human in view
It's so true.

It's a lazy afternoon
And the farmer leaves his reapin'
In the meadow cows are sleepin'
And the speckled trout stop leapin' upstream
As we dream.

A fat pink cloud hangs over the hill
Unfoldin' like a rose.
If you hold my hand and sit real still
You can hear the grass as it grows.

It's a lazy afternoon
And I know a place that's quiet
'Cept for daisies runnin' riot
And there's no one passing by it to see.
Come spend this lazy afternoon with me.

PORCUPINE (NARRATOR): Meanwhile, the tortoise shuffled slowly along the path.

[*TORTOISE slowly ambles on, maybe singing a bit of "Bidin' My Time"*]

TORTOISE [*stops*]: I'm so tired, and I'm sure the hare has finished the race by now. This is pointless. [*sees HARE asleep*] Wait a minute, that's the hare! And he's asleep. That means I might have a chance after all!

BEAVER (NARRATOR): With renewed hope and determination, the tortoise continued toward the finish line. A little later...

HARE [*waking up*]: Oh, I feel so much better! [*looks back to see if the TORTOISE is near*] And there's no sign of that dumb tortoise either. Time to claim my victory!

OWL (NARRATOR): As the hare ran toward the boulder, he could hear cheers and applause.

HARE: Listen to that! They're so excited to see me win!

[*The forest animals are seen in a tight group, congratulating someone*]

HARE: Thank you, thank you!

MOLE [*sees HARE*]: Where on earth have you been?

HARE: I just stopped for a snack and a nap.

MOLE: Well, while you were snacking and napping, look who finished the race!

[The animal group parts to reveal they have been congratulating TORTOISE on his victory]

HARE: What?!

TORTOISE: Hare! An excellent race.

HARE: But how in the world...?

TORTOISE: I told you I could beat you in a race.

MOTHER *[to HARE]*: You should have believed in him!

HARE: I guess I should have. *[to TORTOISE]* I sorry I doubted you. And I'm sorry I made fun of you. Do you think we could be... friends?

TORTOISE: Friends, huh? I don't know – do you think you can slow down enough to keep up with me?

HARE: I think I can. After all....

EVERYONE: Slow and steady wins the race!

[They sing]:

On a wonderful day like today,
I defy any cloud to appear in the sky.
Dare any raindrop to plop in my eye
For the world's in a wonderful way
On a wonderful day like today.

SONGS:

“A Wonderful Day Like Today” from *The Roar of the Greasepaint, The Smell of the Crowd*. Words and music by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley

“Bidin' My Time” from *Girl Crazy*. Words and music by George & Ira Gershwin

“I Believe In You” from *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Words and music by Frank Loesser

“Lazy Afternoon” from *The Golden Apple*. Words by John LaTouche, Music by Jerome Moross