

# The Tortoise and the Hare

As usual, the hare was bragging to all the other animals about his speed. "I'm faster than the wind, quicker than nightfall," he said. "No one has ever beaten me. No one ever will. I challenge any animal here to race me." The foxes and donkeys and frogs and serpents looked on in amazement. No one would accept the hare's challenge. Then a lone voice came up. "I will race you," said the tortoise.

"You!" said the hare, snickering. "Why, that's a fine joke. I will dance around you all the way to the finish line!"

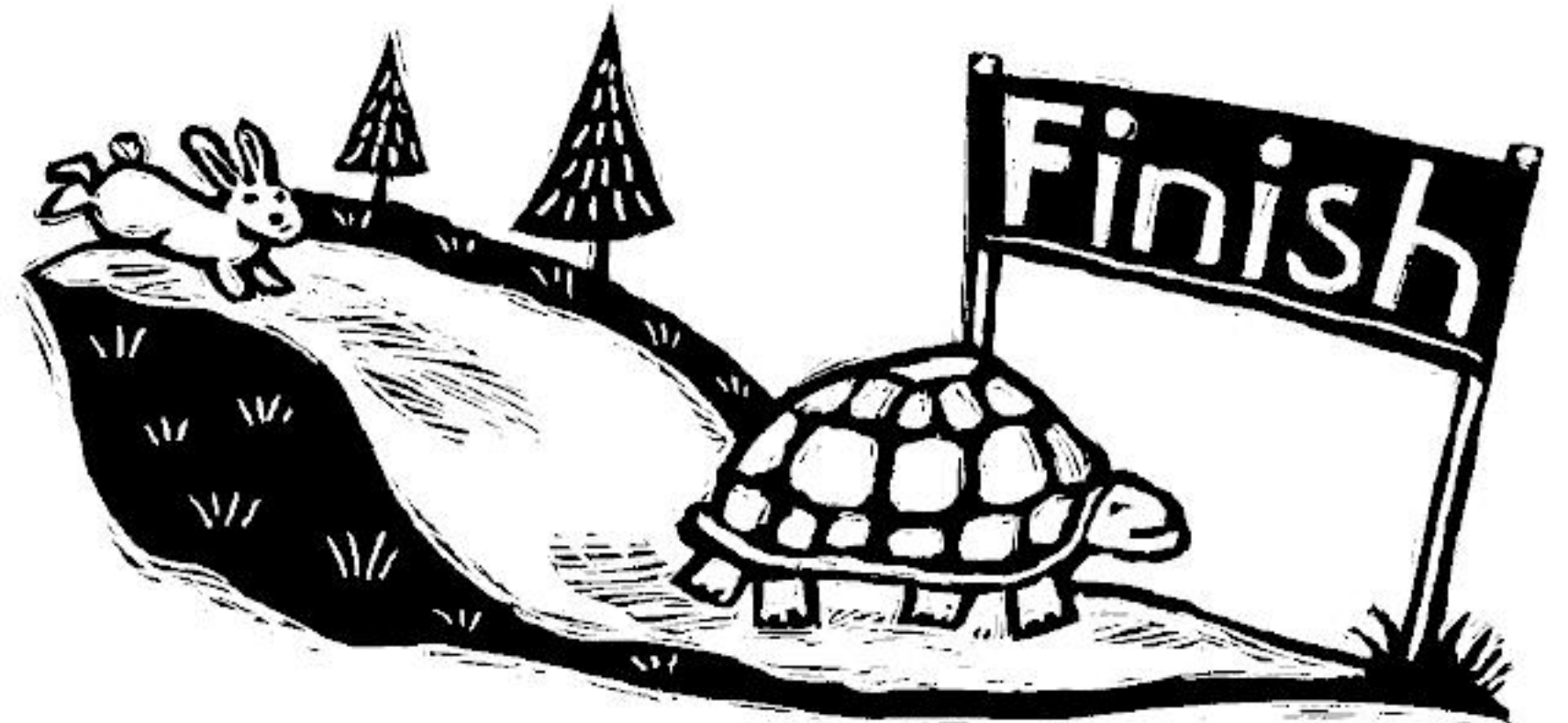
"We'll see about that," said the tortoise quietly. "Shall we go?"

The starting gun was given, and off went the tortoise and the hare. Almost at once, the hare darted over a hillside and was out of sight. The tortoise set off slowly, just plodding along. Soon the hare was far ahead of the tortoise. It was a hot day. He'd grown tired from running so fast. He thought about how far behind the tortoise would be by now. So the hare decided to take a little nap. On a soft, shady patch of grass, he curled up and went to sleep.

Steadily, slowly, the tortoise kept plodding along. The sun fell lower in the sky. The shadows grew longer. The hare woke up and stretched. "I wonder where that tortoise is now," he said to himself. "I had a long nap. I'll find the tortoise is still miles behind me."

The hare looked back down the path. Sure enough, there was no tortoise in sight. Then he looked up the path toward the finish line. Oh no! The tortoise, still plodding along, was now nearing the end of the race.

Then the hare ran the fastest he ever had. But it was too late. The tortoise crawled across the finish line. All the animals shouted, "Tortoise won, tortoise won!" The hare couldn't believe it. And the tortoise just smiled to himself!



**Moral** Slow and steady wins the race.