



# imaginary theatre company

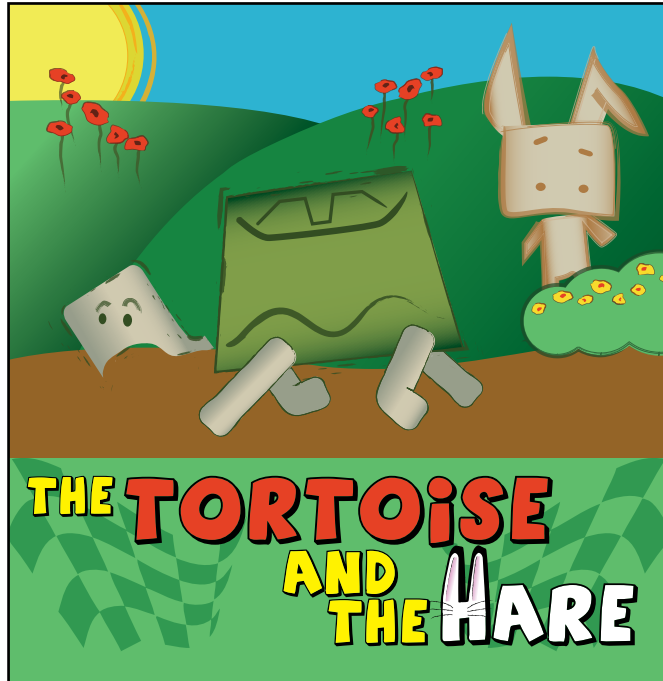
2013–2014 SEASON

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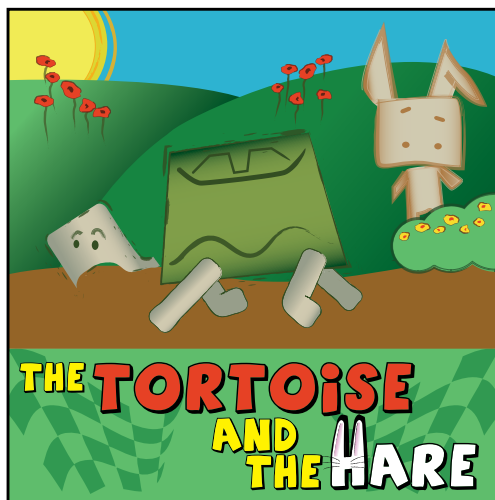
Directed by Larry Schmidt

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# Imaginary theatre company



by Sarah Brandt

Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

Directed by Larry Schmidt

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Costume Designer	Garth Dunbar
Stage Manager	Ashley Newman*
Director of Education	Marsha Coplon
Associate Director of Education	Sarah Brandt
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## The Company

Michael Fariss*	HENRY
Katie Hamilton-Meier*	FRANNIE
Alan Knoll*	WALLY
Laurie McConnell*	SHELLY

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



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## Setting the Scene



Shelly the tortoise, Henry the hare, Frannie the fox and Wally the bear are all friends who live in a forest. Henry is extremely fast and always wins every race he's in. His friends all admire Henry's talent, but no one more than his best friend Shelly, who helps Henry train whenever she has a spare moment.

Everyone is excited when the mayor announces a Fourth of July race, and they can't wait to compete—even Shelly who knows that speed isn't her strong suit. Henry is shocked that anyone would compete against him, especially his best friend. He declares that she has no shot and finds it laughable she would even try. He challenges her to a preliminary race, and the loser doesn't get to compete in the Fourth of July race. Offended by Henry's attitude, Shelly finally sticks up for herself and accepts the challenge. With the encouragement of her more supportive friends, Frannie and Wally, she begins training.

Will Shelly find the strength to win the race or even compete without embarrassing herself? How could a tortoise ever beat a hare in a race? Will Shelly and Henry's friendship survive the competition?



## Who's Who?



**Shelly:** A kind-hearted, self-conscious tortoise who wants to help her friend, but does it at the expense of her own dreams

**Henry:** A very fast hare whose talent is impressive but unfortunately gives him a big ego

**Frannie:** A sassy fox who likes to fix a truck as much she likes to fix her hair

**Wally:** A caring and sensitive bear who likes to support and motivate his friends



# What's the Story?



It's a beautiful day in the forest, and Henry the hare is training. The fastest animal around, Henry makes sure to stay in tip-top shape so he's always prepared for his next race. Shelly the tortoise, Henry's best friend, is looking for him to see if she can help in way. Their friends Frannie the fox and Wally the bear start talking to her about all the "warm fuzzies" a nice day gives them, but Shelly doesn't really get what they're talking about and goes off to find Henry.

Once she finds him, Henry hands off all his training supplies to Shelly and then asks her to admire his newest first place medal with him. He tells her the story of how he won it, and Shelly is full of admiration. Later on when she is all by herself, Shelly laments how she seems to lack any real talent besides being able to pack a gym bag really well. She considers herself "just a simple tortoise," yet she also feels like there's something marvelous inside of her, and she wishes she wasn't so timid and that she could let it shine.

The next morning Frannie rushes in with big news. It seems the mayor just announced a big Fourth of July race, and whoever wins gets to be the grand marshal in the Fourth of July parade. Shelly hints that she might like to compete, but Henry is so focused on what's sure to be another victory for him, he doesn't even notice. Later on, Frannie is telling Wally how excited her sister is to run in the race. Once Henry hears, he says anyone would be crazy to compete against him. Wally tells Henry he's being mean, and he and an offended Frannie leave.

Henry scoffs at them and tells Shelly how lucky he is to have her as a friend, calling her loyal and "the best assistant" he's ever had. Shelly is hurt that's how Henry views their friendship. She really wants to run the race but is not sure she should if Henry will be angry with her. However, after some inspirational words from Frannie and Wally who offer to train with her, she decides to do it. Henry can't believe Shelly thinks she has a chance against him and challenges her to preliminary race. Whoever wins will get to run in the Fourth of July race, while the loser sits out. Being so worked up from Henry's bad attitude, Shelly accepts the challenge, and vows to do the best she can.

The next day at the race, Henry and Shelly take off, with Henry clearly in the lead. He finds the whole process ridiculous and starts running backwards, eats lunch and plays games during the race to show he's not even taking it seriously. Shelly just focuses on finishing and keeps a slow but steady pace. Just before his last lap, Henry decides to take a nap. However, he sleeps longer than he means to, and he wakes up just as Shelly finishes and wins the race! Defeated, Henry considers himself a loser. However, Shelly reminds him he's far from a loser, and she's friends with him because of who he is, not because he has a bunch of trophies. Humbled, Henry apologizes to Shelly. Seeing he's learned his lesson, Shelly accepts his apology and tells him she wants him to still compete in the Fourth of July race even though he lost. Shelly, Henry, Frannie and Wally decide to all train together and run the race as a team—because that's the kind of thing good friends do.

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.



# Words to the Wise



**Glutes:** the muscles in your rear end; short for “gluteus”

**Carburetor:** a car part that helps the engine work

**Poise:** composure or how someone carries themselves; what your mother hopes to accomplish when she tells you to “stand up straight!”

**Protein powder:** a diet supplement that a lot of athletes put in smoothies or food to help them build muscles

**Nutrients:** a substance that’s good for your body—and that often means the green stuff

**Streak:** an uninterrupted series of something

**Timid:** nervous or shy

**Grand marshal:** an honorary leader in a parade

**Pickle:** yes, this usually means the preserved green vegetable, but it sometimes is used to describe a big problem

**Breed:** a type of animal

**Bashful:** besides being one of Snow White’s more adorable seven dwarves, this means being shy or easily embarrassed

**Train:** to learn skills through practice

**Rattler:** a rattle snake—not usually as cute as its name might suggest

**Stamina:** long-lasting energy or strength

**Preliminary:** happening first; coming before something else

**Tarnation:** an exclamation used to express anger or annoyance

**Hike:** taking a long walk usually for exercise

**Forfeit:** to give up or surrender

**Sportsmanship:** good manners when playing sports—like high fives with an opponent after a game

**Showboat:** someone who is trying to get attention and showing off; doesn’t always require a boat

**Strenuous:** difficult and usually requires a lot of energy

**Regimen:** a routine

**Revel:** to celebrate

# Aesop's Fables

*The Tortoise and the Hare* is one of the most popular of Aesop's fables. Who was Aesop? Thought to live around 2600 years ago, Aesop was, according to sources, a slave who won his freedom by telling stories. Although it's not certain that he actually existed, Aesop was mentioned in the writings of many other early storytellers, like Aristotle, Plato and Socrates.

Because it's not even definite that Aesop lived, it's unsure where he was from, though suggestions include Greece, Phrygia (modern-day Turkey), Egypt or Ethiopia. He is thought to have written over 600 fables and was known for his charm and wit. It is believed that Aesop often was an advisor to kings who respected his intellect and required his sharp mind to help solve their problems. Some sources believed Aesop didn't respect the power structure of his time and would often give public orations on ethics to the common people who were drawn to his clever phrasing and insight.

What is a fable anyway?

A fable is a specific type of literary genre. It's a fictional tale that usually features animals, mythical creatures, plant life, forces of nature or inanimate objects who have been given human qualities that allow them to communicate with each other. Through their story, the fable illustrates a moral lesson, which is meant to be universal and transcend time and place, meaning they're as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago and are relatable to everyone no matter where they're from.

Here are some of Aesop's other fables that you probably know. Can you identify the moral lesson in each?

## The Wind and the Sun

One day the Wind and the Sun were arguing about who was the stronger. Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and the Sun said: "I see a way to decide our dispute. Whichever of us can cause that cloak to be removed off that traveller shall be regarded as the stronger. You begin."

So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller to whisk his cloak off. But the harder he blew, the more closely did the traveller wrap his cloak round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair.

Then the Sun came out and shone upon the traveller in a glorious light. Bathed in warmth, the traveller happily took off his cloak. **What's the moral?**

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Moral:

a lesson, especially one concerning what is right or wrong, that can be derived from a story, a piece of information, or an experience

## The Grasshopper and the Ant

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing. An Ant passed by bearing along with him a large ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and sing with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; "We have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil.

When the winter came, the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger—while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. The Ant saw the Grasshopper, weak with starvation, and took pity. It shared the collected food with the Grasshopper, who made sure to prepare for winter every year after that. **What's the moral?**

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## The Lion and the Mouse

Once when a Lion was asleep, a little Mouse began running up and down upon his back; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon the Mouse, and opened his big jaws to swallow him.

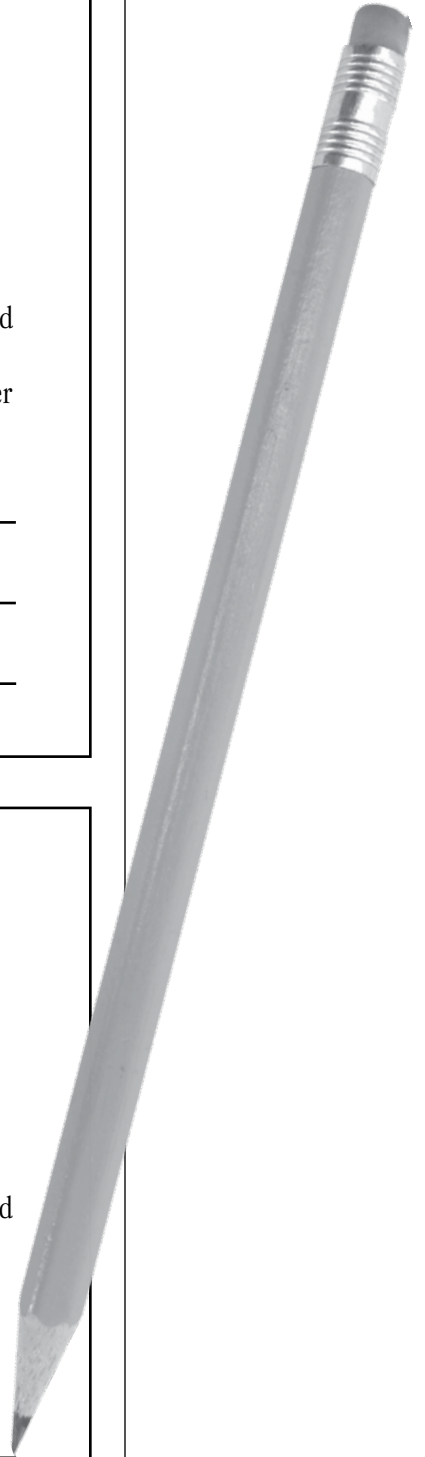
"Pardon, O King," cried the little Mouse. "Forgive me this time, and I shall never forget it. Who knows but when I may be able to help you in the future?" The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the little Mouse being able to help him that he lifted up his paw and let him go.

Some time after, the Lion was caught in a trap and tied to a tree by hunters who went to find a wagon to carry the beast. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the Lion, setting him free and making him forever grateful to his small but great friend. **What's the moral?**

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# Fast and Slow

Shelly and Henry can likely identify with many of the creatures listed below.

## Fast and furious

You'd never want to compete against one of these animals in race!

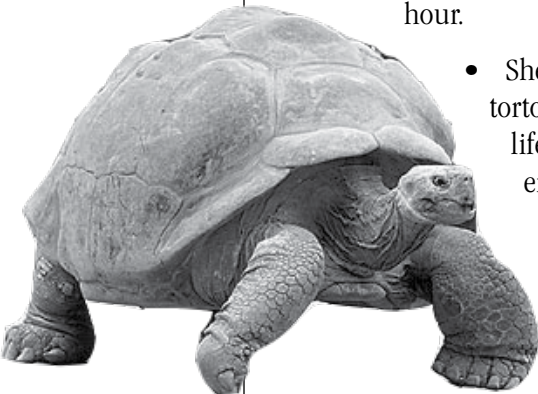


- Considered the world's fastest mammal, the cheetah's sleek body and strong muscles help it to run as fast as 70 miles per hour (mph), three times faster than the top running speed for a human, which is about 22 mph.
- The pronghorn antelope is considered the second fastest land animal at 60 mph, making it very difficult for predators to catch.
- Thought to be the fastest bird is the peregrine falcon, which reaches its top speed when in a hunting dive known as "the stoop," where it soars really high and dives steeply at a whopping 200 mph! When flying horizontally, it reaches a cruising speed of around 90 mph.
- The sailfish is considered the world's fastest fish, which can swim up to 42 mph.
- Henry's speedy skills probably run in the family—the brown hare is known for its quick pace, with its long back legs helping it to reach speeds of up to 48 mph.

## Slowpokes

If speed is important to you, don't count on any of the below animals who ask, "What's the rush?"

- The slowest mammal is considered to be the three-toed sloth, who averages a distance of only 0.15 miles per hour.
- Snails can reach a speed of 50 yards per hour, which amounts to about 1.3 centimeters per second. One snail set a world record in 1995 by finishing the 13-inch snail championship race in England in 2 minutes and 20 seconds.
- Sharks are known to be quick predators, but not every member of the sharp-toothed family meets that expectation. The Greenland shark swims at an average speed of one mile per hour.
- As one of the world's slowest birds, the common house sparrow flies at about 15-19 miles per hour.
- Shelly could share training tips with her giant cousin, the giant Galapagos tortoise, which walks an average of 0.16 miles per hour. Though, if your average life expectancy was 150 years, you probably wouldn't feel the need to hurry either!





# Believing in Yourself

The odds were stacked against Shelly in the race, but she worked hard and never gave up no matter how difficult it got. That persistence and positive attitude helped her win. Let's take a closer look at how she earned her victory.

1. Name three things Shelly did to motivate herself.

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2. Name an insecurity each character has about themselves. Now name a strength for each character.

Shelly \_\_\_\_\_

Henry \_\_\_\_\_

Frannie \_\_\_\_\_

Wally \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you have a big goal that seems out of reach, but it's an important dream to you? Answer these questions to see what you can do to accomplish that goal.

a. What is your goal or dream?

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b. Why does it seem difficult to achieve?

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c. Name five (or more!) things that you can do to help you accomplish your goal. Try to include both physical and mental tasks. For instance, if you want make to make the soccer team, maybe include practicing four times a week to improve your actual physical skills, but also writing down one positive thing about yourself on a daily basis to improve your self-esteem.

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# Universal Themes

Some of the best things about fables are their common themes that can be shared and displayed in a variety of ways. Shelly and Henry's story is much like a number of other famous tales but is just told in a different way.

## The Little Engine That Could

Have you ever been told you can't accomplish something and you repeat a little mantra to inspire and motivate yourself? Then you're not so different from the little engine in this famous children's book!

A little railroad engine worked for a station yard, pulling only a few cars on and off the switches due to its size. One morning, an especially long train of freight-cars asked a one of the large engines at the yard to take it over a hill. "I can't. That is too much for me," said the large engine. The train asked other large engines, but they all refused because it seemed too difficult. Finally the train asked the little switch engine to do it, who said yes. "I think I can," puffed the little locomotive, and put it itself in front of the big heavy train. As it went up the hill, the little engine kept bravely puffing faster and faster, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

As it neared the top the of the hill, it went more slowly but kept saying, "I—think—I—can, I—think—I—can." The little engine finally reached the top of the hill and just before it began its much easier descent, it congratulated itself by saying: "I thought I could, I thought I could."

What did you like about this story? Which character in *The Tortoise and the Hare* did the little engine remind you of? How so?

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Can you think of any other stories that are similar to that of Shelly and Henry? What makes them similar?

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# Add it Up

Shelly's equipment fund is getting a little low, so she's doing some calculations to see how much she and Henry have spent on racing supplies this month. Help her figure out who spent more.

## SHELLY

\$0.50 for bandaids  
+ \$5.00 for ice packs

\_\_\_\_\_

\$50.00 for running shoes  
+ \$0.25 for bubble gum

\_\_\_\_\_

\$2.50 for gatorade  
+ \$10.00 for running socks

\_\_\_\_\_

\$3.25 for water bottles  
+ \$5.00 for vitamins

\_\_\_\_\_

\$25.00 for entry fees  
+ \$10.00 for running shorts

\_\_\_\_\_

## HENRY

\$2.50 for bubble gum  
+ \$5.50 for energy drinks

\_\_\_\_\_

\$10.00 for protein shakes  
+ \$4.50 for shoe insoles

\_\_\_\_\_

\$50.00 for entry fees  
+ \$12.75 for ice packs

\_\_\_\_\_

\$14.00 for ankle braces  
+ \$20.25 for running shorts

\_\_\_\_\_

\$7.50 for power bars  
+ \$4.25 for water bottles

\_\_\_\_\_

**BONUS:** Who spent more?

# What Does a Hare Wear?

In this production of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, the costumes were designed by Garth Dunbar. Garth chose how he wanted each character to look and what he wanted them to wear. If you were designing a racing outfit for Henry, what would it look like? Draw your racing costume for Henry on the hare below.

