

THEREBY HANGS A TALE

By

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

AESOP: The narrator. Can be read by teacher or student.

### *"TORTOISE & THE HARE"*

TORTOISE: A turtle, slow and steady in character. Speaks slowly and deliberately.

HARE: A rabbit, quick and impulsive. Overly confident and boastful.

PIG: An observer. Doubtful of the Tortoise.

SKUNK: A prankster. Always joking.

FOX : Acts as judge. Thinks the Hare is a sure winner.

### *"THE FOX & THE GRAPES"*

FOX: Thinks he is smarter than he is. A braggart.

GRAPES: Speak together. Act as a team. A bit goofy and "sour"castic.

### *"THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF"*

BLACKSMITH: Honest and brave.

FRIAR SMYTHE: The local priest. Pious & righteous.

LADY ANNE: The richest lady in town.

SHEPHERD BOY: A prankster. A liar.

THE WOLF: Funny. Not overly smart.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Portions of the instrumental track can be reproduced to use as an underscore for transitions. The symbol \*\* will be used within the script to indicate a good place for transition music. This can make the production have a better flow. Each fable is recorded to be used as a listening tool, as well as in performance. If desired, teachers can read the original tale and follow-up with dramatized audio version.

Props are a fun way to involve students and enhance the production. Students can create props using odds and ends from home and school. Suggested prop list: clipboard and pencil, string for “finishing line”, pennants for race, blue ribbon and certificate, “starting and finishing” flag, rock for Hare to sit on. Use your imagination to make more!

If combining several fables, simply use audio track to underscore Aesop’s exits and entrances. Aesop can introduce individual fables by reading the title from a “scroll” and then speaking his introductory monologue for the individual fable. “Thereby Hangs A Tale” can be sung at beginning and end, or just at beginning and vocal track can be used for final bows.

## ABOUT AESOP’S FABLES

According to literary HISTORY, Aesop was a slave who lived on the island of Samos off Asia Minor. He was given his freedom by his master, Iadmon. This is the only documented information known about him.

According to LEGEND, Aesop was the slave of the philosopher Zanthus, on the island of Samos. He had a large misshapen head on a dwarfish body, a hump back, bowed legs and a pot belly. It is said that although he was deformed in body, his mind was quick and he used it to his advantage. He did not tell tale after tale to amuse an audience. He told his fables to win an argument or to decide an issue. Because his stories often fit other’s circumstances, they spread far and wide and endured. His legendary wisdom brought him renown as a spokesman of humanity.

## ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

*THEREBY HANGS A TALE* is a dramical (mini-drama w/music) designed to be produced with minimal production qualities. This production includes the stories “*The Tortoise and the Hare*”, “*The Fox and the Grapes*”, and “*The Boy Who Cried Wolf!*”. It is perfect for listening, reading or performing within the classroom environment. It includes parts for 16 characters (including Aesop) and begins with a musical number, “Thereby Hangs A Tale”. Side One of audio cassette is a complete vocal version for listening or rehearsal and Side Two is a performance tape (instrumental tracks only). Suggestions for costuming are included and accompanying ears, tails and masks are available at a separate cost.

ACT I

SCENE I

SETTING: A small country village

AT RISE: ALL sing[ "THEREBY HANGS A  
TALE". After song, AESOP enters.

AESOP

Sometimes it's HARD to keep going. The reasons for procrastination are not as important as learning HOW to persist. Everybody puts things off at one time or another. Each of us neglects to follow through once in awhile. Some of us make it a habit. It's our choice, but it is FACT that the main ingredient in success is to keep going if you want to reach your goal.

(Enter HARE, PIG and FOX, talking amongst themselves)

I have invited some of my friends to help me illustrate my point. Hi guys!

(HARE, PIG and FOX acknowledge AESOP . . .  
"Hey, Aesop!, How you doing?, What's up?")

A long long time ago, about 14 or 15 hundred years, my friend the HARE was joking around and making fun of another pal, the TORTOISE. It was all in jest, of course, but what came out of the whole thing was pretty interesting . . . Let's listen.

HARE

I watched him walk from one end of town to the other. It took him FOREVER! He's so slow he looks at his calendar to tell what time it is.

(Laughter. PIG snorts)

SKUNK

How about this one? He's so slow he thinks molasses is fast.

(Laughter. PIG snorts)

PIG

I've got one. He's so slow, if he leaves home he may never get back.

(PIG snorts and laughs. SKUNK and HARE just look at him.  
PIG slowly stops laughing. Enter TORTOISE)

TORTOISE

Hi everyone. What's so funny?

(ALL are startled by TORTOISE. Try to cover)

HARE

Ah, hi Tortoise.

SKUNK

Pig was just telling us a funny joke.

HARE

Yeah, funny.

(THEY laugh. Nudge PIG who starts to snort again)

TORTOISE

I guess I got here a little too late for the punch line.

HARE

(To SKUNK and PIG)

He's so slow he missed the punch line.

(THEY laugh even harder.)

TORTOISE

What was that, Hare?

HARE

I said, ah, it's so sad you missed the punch line. Listen, I, ah, gotta get going. I'm training for the race on Saturday. Gotta keep the old muscles in tune. I'll see you guys, later.

(HARE starts to exit)

TORTOISE

Wait a minute, Hare. I'll go with you.

HARE

Sorry, Tortoise, but I'm afraid I'll be too fast for you. Some other time.

(Starts to exit, again)

TORTOISE

But I'm training for the race, too.

HARE

(Stops abruptly)

YOU?

SKUNK and PIG

YOU entered the race?

(Enter FOX)

FOX

He has, indeed. And he's your only opponent.

ALL

What?

FOX

It's true. It seems that no one else wants to run against you, Hare. Tortoise here is the only one who thinks he can . . . beat you to the finish line.

(SKUNK, PIG, HARE snicker and try to hide laughter)

TORTOISE

What's so funny now?

HARE

Ah, heh heh, well, come on, Tortoise. You gotta admit, the idea of you and ME racing is, ah, . . .

(HE turns to SKUNK, FOX & PIG and starts laughing)

HARE (Cont'd)

. . . pretty funny!

(ALL except TORTOISE laugh uproariously)

TORTOISE

I KNOW I can beat you, Hare. In fact, I'm so sure of it, why don't we just have that race right now.

(Laughter stops abruptly)

ALL

RIGHT NOW!!!!??

TORTOISE

Right now.

(Snickering starts again)

FOX

Are you sure you want to do that, Tortoise? I mean, you might want to rethink this.

HARE

Yeah, but you better start thinking right now just in case it takes you awhile to come up with an answer.

(ALL laugh hysterically)

TORTOISE

(Confidently)

I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

HARE

Well then, get on your mark, Tortoise, and we'll get this show on the road, so to speak.

FOX

You know the rules.

HARE & TORTOISE

Uh-huh.

FOX

No nudging or pushing of any kind. No roughhousing or cheating.

HARE

Gotcha.

FOX

Racers must finish no matter what and are disqualified for any misconduct.

TORTOISE

Understood.

FOX

The first racer to cross the finish line is the winner. Are you ready?

HARE & TORTOISE

(THEY get on their marks)

Ready!

FOX

Skunk and Pig, can you do the countdown?

SKUNK & PIG

Get ready. Get set. GO!!!!!!

(\*\*TORTOISE & HARE head out. HARE is WAY ahead of  
TORTOISE already.

SKUNK

And they're off like a herd of turtles!

(PIG & FOX laugh)

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