

Helping you choose books for children



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opening extract from

Hare and the Tortoise

written by

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illustrated by

Giselle Potter

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For Sydney, Jaya, Shidu and Paul — R. B.
For Pia and Isabel — G. P.

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The Hare and the Tortoise

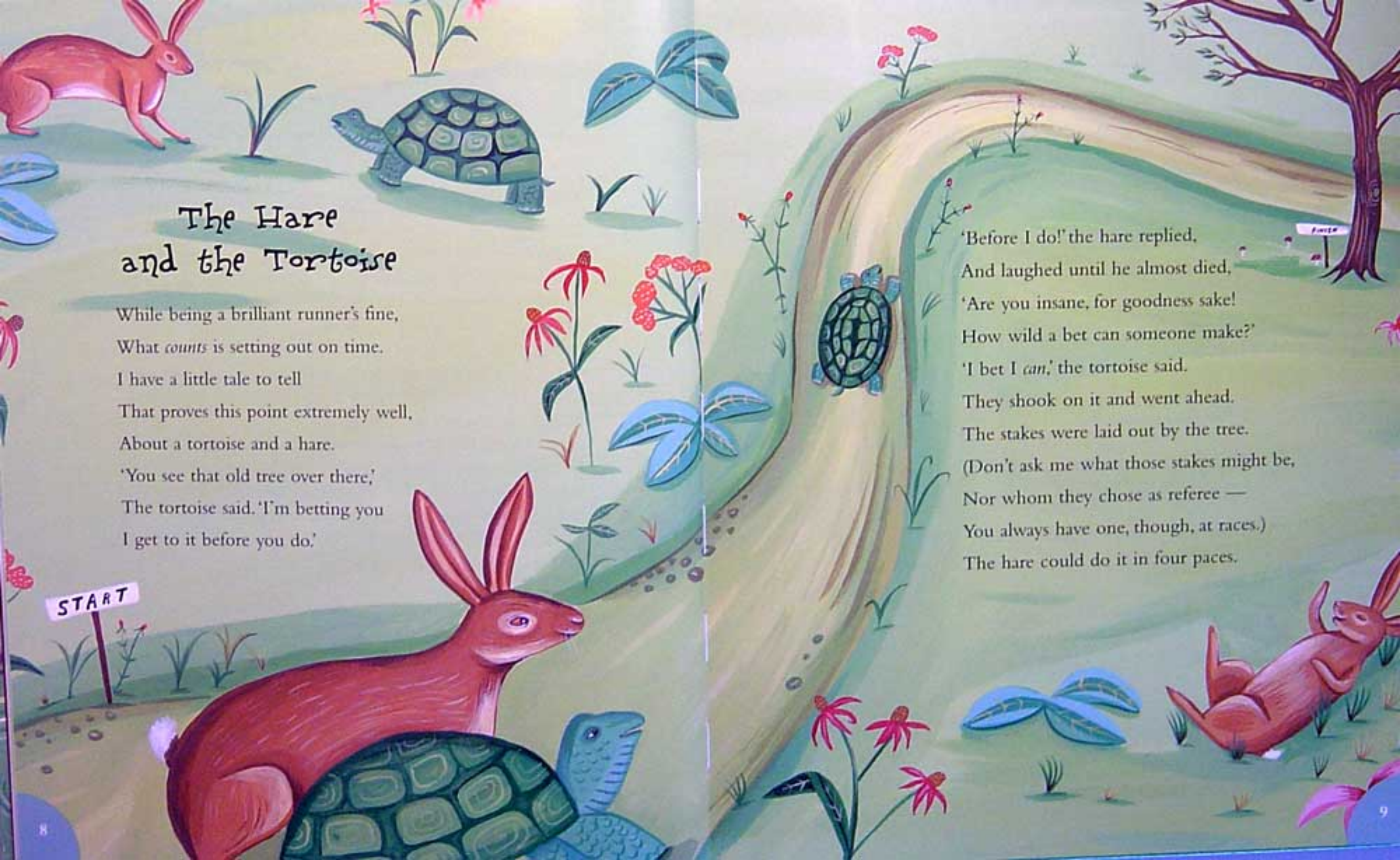
and other Fables of La Fontaine



Translated by Ranjit Bolt Illustrated by Giselle Potter



Barefoot Books
Celebrating Art and Story

The illustration is a colorful, whimsical scene depicting the fable. On the left, a pink hare stands alert. In the center, a green tortoise with a patterned shell is moving along a winding yellow path. The landscape is dotted with various plants, including red flowers and green leaves. In the background, a large tree stands on the right. A small sign on the left reads 'START' and another on the right reads 'FINISH'. The hare is shown in a state of exhaustion on the right side of the page, lying on its back.

The Hare and the Tortoise

While being a brilliant runner's fine,
What *counts* is setting out on time.
I have a little tale to tell
That proves this point extremely well,
About a tortoise and a hare.
'You see that old tree over there,'
The tortoise said, 'I'm betting you
I get to it before you do.'

'Before I do!' the hare replied,
And laughed until he almost died,
'Are you insane, for goodness sake!
How wild a bet can someone make?'
'I bet I *can*,' the tortoise said.
They shook on it and went ahead.
The stakes were laid out by the tree.
(Don't ask me what those stakes might be,
Nor whom they chose as referee —
You always have one, though, at races.)
The hare could do it in four paces.

START

FINISH



He could have got there and returned
In next to no time, but he spurned
A hollow victory, so instead,
While off the tortoise slowly sped,
He took a nap then ate some grass,
Tested the wind and let time pass.
The tortoise now was in top gear,
Doing at least a mile a year,
Which was as fast as she could go.
You should have heard her puff and blow,
But still the hare would not begin,
Still he despised an easy win.



He hummed a tune, did a headstand,
Anything *but* the task at hand.
Seeing the tortoise near the tree,
He did *hare off* eventually.
Fast as an arrow from a bow,
This burst of speed proved pointless, though —
Although it was a record run,
The tortoise had already won.
'What did I tell you?' she tee-hee'd.
'What use is your amazing speed?
I've won! I don't know where you'd be
If you'd a house to lug like me!'

